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# LECTURES

LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

# LECTURES

# DELIVERED IN AMERICA

## IN 1874

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY, F.L.S., F.G.S.

RECTOR OF EVERSLEY: CANON OF WESTMINSTER

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE OF WALES

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LONDON

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1875

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*DEDICATION.*

TO

CYRUS FIELD, J. A. C. GRAY,

AND ALL THOSE VALUED AMERICAN FRIENDS WHO WELCOMED

MY HUSBAND TO THEIR GREAT COUNTRY,

AND THROUGH WHOSE GENEROUS KINDNESS HE WAS ENABLED

IN THE LAST YEAR OF HIS LIFE

TO REALISE THE DREAMS OF HIS YOUTH

BY THE SIGHT, NOT ONLY OF THE EASTERN STATES AND CITIES,

BUT OF THE FAR WEST, THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS,

AND THE YO SEMITE VALLEY,

I DEDICATE THESE LECTURES WITH DEEPEST GRATITUDE

In Memoriam.

FANNY E. KINGSLEY.

BYFLEET: *August* 1875.

# LECTURES

## DELIVERED IN AMERICA IN 1874.

### LECTURE I.

#### WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

REVERENCE for age, at least so it has long seemed to me, reverence for age, I say, is a fair test of the vigour of youth; and, conversely, insolence toward the old and the past, whether in individuals or in nations, is a sign rather of weakness than of strength. And the cause, I think, is this. The rich and strong young natures, which feel themselves capable of original thought and work, have a corresponding respect for those who, in the generations gone by, have thought and worked as they hope to do hereafter. And this temper, understand me, so far from being servile, or even merely conservative, usually accompanies true independence of spirit. The young athlete, like the young race-horse, does not despise, but emulate, his sire; even though the old victor be long past his prime. The young soldier admires the old general;

the young midshipman the old admiral, just in proportion as he himself is likely to be a daring and able officer hereafter. The son, when grown to man's estate, may say to his father, I look on you still with all respect and admiration. I have learnt, and desire always, to learn from you. But you must be to me now, not a dictator, but an example. You became what you are by following your own line; and you must let me rival you, and do you honour, by following mine.

This, I believe, is true of nations as well as of individuals. I do not hesitate to say that, paradoxical as it may seem, the most original races—those who have succeeded best and left their stamp most broadly and permanently on the human race—have also been the most teachable, provided they were allowed to learn in their own way and to adapt to their own purposes any higher ancient civilisation with which they came in contact. What more striking instances of this truth—for truth it is—than the reverence of the free Republican Greek for the old despotic civilisation of Egypt? and of the free Norseman, our own ancestor, for the old and equally despotic civilisation of Rome?

These—the two most originative and most progressive races of Europe—had a faith in, an awe of, the supposed or real wisdom of the men of old time, which was often exaggerated into a superstition: but

never—thanks to their own innate force—degenerated into a bondage.

Pardon me this somewhat dry proœmium; and pardon me, too, if it leads me on to a compliment to the American people, which I trust you will not think impertinent.

For I have seen, and seen with joy, a like spirit in those Americans whom it has been my good fortune to meet in my own land. I mean this:—That I found in them, however self-teaching and self-determining they might be, that genial reverence for antiquity which I hold to be the sign of a truly generous—that is in the right sense of the grand old word—a truly high-bred, nature. I have been touched, and deeply touched, at finding so many of them, on landing for the first time at Liverpool, hurrying off to our quaint old city of Chester to gaze on its old girdle of walls and towers; Roman, Mediæval, Caroline; its curious 'Rows' of overhanging houses; its fragments of Roman baths and inscriptions; its modest little Cathedral; and the—really very few—relics of English history which it contains. Even two banners of an old Cheshire regiment which had been in the Peninsular war were almost as interesting, to some, as an illuminated Bible of the early Middle Age. More than once have I had to repress the enthusiasm of some charming lady and say, 'But this is nothing. Do not waste your admiration here. Go on. See the British Mu-

seum, its marbles and its manuscripts—See the French Cathedrals; the ruins of Provence and Italy; the galleries of Florence, Naples, Rome.'

'Ah, but you must remember,' was the answer, 'these are the first old things I ever saw.'

A mere sentiment? Yes: but as poets know, and statesmen ought to know, it is by sentiment, when well directed—as by sorrow, when well used—by sentiment, I say, great nations live. When sentiment dies out, and mere prosaic calculation of loss and profit takes its place, then comes a Byzantine epoch, a Chinese epoch, decrepitude, and slow decay.

And so the eagerness of those generous young souls was to me a good augury for the future, of them, and of their native land. They seemed to me—and I say again it touched me, often deeply—to be realising to themselves their rightful place in the community of the civilised nations of all lands, and of all times—realising to themselves that they were indeed

Heirs of all the ages, foremost in the ranks of time;

and minded, therefore, like wise and noble heirs, not to despise and squander, but to treasure and to use that inheritance, and the accumulated labours of the mighty dead.

I saw this, I say, at Chester. And therefore I was not surprised to find the pleasant experience repeated, and to even a higher degree, at Westminster.

A pleasant experience, I say. I know few more agreeable occupations than showing a party of Americans round our own great Abbey; and sentimentalising, if you will, in sympathy with them, over England's Pantheon.

I pause to confess once more that it is almost an impertinence in me to pay you such a compliment. You have a right to answer me—How could it be otherwise?—Are we not educated people? Has not our taste been trained by native authors, who were at least civilised enough to value the great past, without the need of any European crossing the seas to tell us of its wealth?

If you reprove me thus, I can but say that the reproof is just, and will remain just, as long as your poets are what they are; and as long, above all, as you reverence as much in America as we do in England, the poetry of Mr. Longfellow. He has not, if I recollect aright, ever employed his muse in commemorating our great Abbey; but that muse is instinct with all those lofty and yet tender emotions which the sight of that great Abbey should call out. He knows, as few know on our side of the wide water, the effect, chastening and yet ennobling, of such architecture, consecrated by such associations. He has not only perceived and drank in all that is purest and noblest in the now sleeping last ten centuries: but he has combined it, again and again, with that which is pur-

est and noblest in the waking and yearning present; and combined it organically and livingly, as leaf and stem combines with flower and fruit. Yes; as long as the poet who could write both the *Belfry of Bruges* and *The Village Blacksmith* is read among you, there is no need for me to bid you reverence the past; and little need, I trust, for me to tell those whom I leave at home to reverence the present. For it is a fact—of which some Americans may not be as well aware as they should be—that your exquisite poet has exercised an influence in Britain it may be as great as, and certainly more varied than, that which he has exercised in his native land. With us—as, I presume, with you—he has penetrated into thousands of Puritan homes, and awakened tens of thousands of young hearts to the beauty and the nobleness of the old pre-Reformation age, and of that romance and art from which their too exclusive hereditary training had, until his time, shut them out. And he has thus, truly, done a sacred deed in turning the hearts of the children to their fathers. That was enough: but that is not the whole. He has, conversely, turned the hearts of the fathers to the children. The world-wide humanity of his poems, and, to be just, of all your American poets who have studied in his school, has produced throughout Great Britain a just reverence and affection for the American mind which will have—which has had already—

large social and political results. Be sure, be sure, that in spite of passing jars, our empire will never be long unjust to yours, while Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Lowell remain not merely the household bards —though that is much—but counsellors, comforters, and trusted friends to hundreds of thousands of gentle and earnest souls; from the palace to the parsonage, from the little village shop to the farm-house on the lonely down.

But there is another American author—who was the delight of my own youth, and who should have been my teacher also, for he was a master of our common tongue, and his prose is as graceful and felicitous as poor Elia's own, and it is certainly more manly—another American author, I say, who, with that high-bred reverence for what is old, has told you already more about Westminster Abbey, and told it better, than I am likely to tell it. Need I say that I mean the lamented Washington Irving? Ah, that our authors had always been as just to you as he was just to us; and indeed more than just; for in his courtesy and geniality he saw us somewhat *en beau*, and treated old John Bull too much as the poet advises us to treat young and fair ladies—

> Be to their faults a little blind,
> Be to their virtues very kind.

But what a charming book is that old 'Sketch-

book.' And what a charming essay that on our great Abbey, set with such gems of prose as these,—

'The sun was pouring down a yellow autumnal ray into the square of the cloisters, beaming upon a scanty spot of grass in the centre, and lighting up an angle of the vaulted passage with a kind of dusty splendour. From between the arcades, the eye glanced up to a bit of blue sky, or a passing cloud, and beheld the sun-gilt pinnacles of the Abbey towering into the azure heaven.'

Or this again, describing the general effect of Henry the Seventh's unrivalled chapel,—'The very walls are wrought into universal ornament; encrusted with tracery, and scooped into niches, crowded with the statues of saints and martyrs. Stone seems, by the cunning labour of the chisel, to have been robbed of its weight and density; suspended aloft as if by magic; and the fretted roof achieved with the wonderful minuteness and airy security of a cobweb.'

'Dusty splendour,' 'airy security,' epithets so unexpected, and yet so felicitous, as to be seemingly accidental. Such are the tokens of that highest art, which is—to conceal its own existence. After such speech as that, what have I to tell you of the great old Abbey?

Yet there are one or two things, I dare to say, which Washington Irving would have written differently had he visited Westminster, not forty years ago, but now.

I think, in the first place, that if he visited the great Abbey now, he would not have noticed that look of dilapidation at which he hints—and perhaps had a right to hint—some forty years ago. Dilapidation, dirt, and negligence are as hateful to us now, as to the builder of the newest house outside. We too, for more than a generation past, have felt, in common with the rest of England and with all the nations of Northern Europe, that awakened reverence for Mediæval Art and Mediæval History, which is —for good and for evil—the special social phenomenon of our times; the natural and, on the whole, useful countercheck to that extreme of revolutionary feeling which issues—as it did in Paris but three years ago—in utter hatred and renunciation of the past, and destruction of its monuments.

To preserve, to restore, and, if not, to copy, as a sort of filial duty, the buildings which our forefathers have left us, is now held to be the very mark of cultivation and good taste in Britain. It may be that we carry it too far; that by a servile and Chinese exactness of imitation we are crippling what originality of genius may exist among our draughtsmen, sculptors, architects. But we at least confess thereby that we cannot invent and create as could our ancestors five hundred years ago; and as long as that is the case it is more wise in us—as in any people—to exhaust the signification and power of the past, and to learn all

we can from older schools of art and thought ere we attempt novelties of our own which, I confess freely, usually issue in the ugly and the ludicrous.

Be that as it may, we of Westminster Abbey have become, like other Englishmen, repairers and restorers. Had we not so become, the nation would have demanded an account of us, as guardians of its national mausoleum, the building of which our illustrious Dean has so well said—

'Of all the characteristics of Westminster Abbey, that which most endears it to the nation and gives most force to its name—which has, more than anything else, made it the home of the people of England and the most venerated fabric of the English Church—is not so much its glory as the seat of the coronations, or as the sepulchre of the kings; not so much its school, or its monastery, or its chapter, or its sanctuary, as the fact that it is the resting-place of famous Englishmen, from every rank and creed, and every form of genius. It is not only Reims Cathedral and St. Denys both in one; but it is what the Pantheon was intended to be to France—what the Valhalla is to Germany—what Santa Croce is to Italy. . . . It is this which inspired the saying of Nelson—Victory or Westminster Abbey. It is this which has intertwined it with so many eloquent passages of Macaulay. It is this which gives point to the allusions of recent Nonconformist statesmen, least inclined to draw illus-

trations from ecclesiastical buildings. It is this which gives most promise of vitality to the whole institution. Kings are no longer buried within its walls; even the splendour of pageants has ceased to attract. But the desire to be buried in Westminster Abbey is as strong as ever.

'This sprang, in the first instance, as a natural off-shoot from the coronations and interments of the kings. Had they, like those of France, of Spain, of Austria, of Russia—been buried far away in some secluded spot, or had the English nation stood aloof from the English monarchy, it might have been otherwise. The sepulchral chapels built by Henry the Third and Henry the Seventh might have stood alone in their glory. No meaner dust need ever have mingled with the dust of Plantagenets, Tudors, Stuarts, and Guelphs. . . But it has been the peculiar privilege of the kings of England that neither in life nor in death have they been parted from their people. As the Council of the Nation and the Courts of Law have pressed into the Palace of Westminster, and engirdled the very throne itself, so the ashes of the great citizens of England have pressed into the sepulchre of the kings, and surrounded them as with a guard of honour after their death. We are sometimes inclined bitterly to contrast the placid dignity of our recumbent kings, with Chatham gesticulating from the northern transept, or Pitt from the western door, or Shakspeare

leaning on his column in Poet's Corner, or Wolfe expiring by the chapel of St. John. But, in fact, they are, in their different ways, keeping guard over the shrine of our monarchs and our laws; and their very incongruity and variety become symbols of that harmonious diversity in unity which pervades our whole commonwealth.'

Honoured by such a trust, we who serve God daily in the great Abbey are not unmindful of the duty which lies on us to preserve and to restore, to the best of our power, the general fabric; and to call on government and on private persons to preserve and restore those monuments, for which they, not we, are responsible. A stranger will not often enter our Abbey without finding somewhere or other among its vast arcades, skilled workmen busy over mosaic, marble, bronze, or 'storied window richly dight;' and the very cloisters, which to Washington Irving's eye were 'discoloured with damp, crumbling with age, and crusted with a coat of hoary moss,' are being repaired till that 'rich tracery of the arches, and that leafy beauty of the roses which adorn the keystones'—of which he tells—shall be as sharp and bright as they were first, 500 years ago.

One sentiment, again, which was called up in the mind of your charming essayist, at the sight of Westminster Abbey, I have not felt myself: I mean its sadness. 'What,' says he, 'is this vast assembly of

sepulchres but a treasury of humiliation? a huge pile of reiterated homilies on the emptiness of renown and the certainty of oblivion.'

So does that 'mournful magnificence' of which he speaks, seem to have weighed on him, that he takes for the motto of his whole essay, that grand Elizabethan epigram—

> When I behold, with deep astonishment,
> To famous Westminster how there resort,
> Living in brasse or stony monument,
> The Princes and the worthies of all sort;
> Do I not see re-formed nobilitie,
> Without contempt, or pride, or ostentation,
> And look upon offenseless majestie,
> Naked of pomp or earthly domination?
> And how a play-game of a painted stone
> Contents the quiet, now, and silent sprites,
> Whom all the world, which late they stood upon,
> Could not content, nor quench their appetites.
> Life is a frost of cold felicities;
> And death the thaw of all our vanities.

True, true—who knows it not, who has lived fifty years in such a world as this?—and yet but half the truth.

Were there no after-life, no juster home beyond the grave, where each good deed—so spake the most august of lips—shall in no wise lose its reward—is it nought, *virûm volitare per ora*, to live upon the lips of

men, and find an immortality, even for a few centuries, in their hearts? I know what answer healthy souls have made in every age to that question; and what they will make to the end, as long as the respect of their fellow-creatures is, as our Creator meant that it should be, precious to virtuous men. And let none talk of 'the play-game of a painted stone,' of 'the worthless honours of a bust.' The worth of honour lies in that same worthlessness. Fair money wage for fair work done, no wise man will despise. But that is pay, not honour; the very preciousness whereof—like the old victor's parsley crown in the Greek games—is that it had no value, gave no pleasure, save that which is imperishable, spiritual, and not to be represented by gold nor quintessential diamond.

Therefore, to me at least, the Abbey speaks, not of vanity and disappointment, but of content and peace.

The quiet now and silent sprites

of whom old Christolero sings, they are content; and well for them that they should be. They have received their nation's thanks, and ask no more, save to lie there in peace. They have had justice done them; and more than one is there, who had scant justice done him while alive. Even Castlereagh is there, in spite of Byron's and of Shelley's scorn. It may be that they too have found out ere now, that there he ought

to be. The nation has been just to him who, in such wild times as the world had not seen for full three hundred years, did his duty according to his light, and died in doing it; and his sad noble face looks down on Englishmen as they go by, not with reproach, but rather with content.

Content, I say, and peace. Peace from their toil, and peace with their fellow-men. They are at least at rest. *Obdormierunt in pace.* They have fallen asleep in peace. The galled shoulder is freed from the collar at last. The brave old horse has done his stage and lain down in the inn. There are no more mistakes now, no more sores, no more falls; and no more whip, thank God, laid on too often when it was least needed and most felt.

And there are no more quarrels, too. Old personal feuds, old party bickerings, old differences of creed, and hatreds in the name of the God of love—all those are past, in that world of which the Abbey is to me a symbol and a sacrament. Pitt and Fox, Warren Hastings and Macaulay, they can afford to be near to each other in the Abbey; for they understand each other now elsewhere; and the Romish Abbot's bones do not stir in their grave beside the bones of the Protestant Divine whom he, it may be, would have burned alive on earth.

In the south aisle of Henry the VIIth's Chapel lies in royal pomp she who so long was Britain's

bane—'the daughter of debate, who discord still did sow'—poor Mary Queen of Scots. But English and Scots alike have forgotton the streams of noble blood she cost their nations; and look sadly and pityingly upon her effigy—why not?

> Nothing is left of her
> Now but pure womanly.

And in the corresponding aisle upon the north, in a like tomb—which the voice of the English people demanded from the son of Mary Stuart—lies even a sadder figure still—poor Queen Elizabeth. To her indeed, in her last days, Vanity of vanities—all was vanity. Tyrone's rebellion killed her. 'This fruit have I of all my labours which I have taken under the sun'—and with a whole book of Ecclesiastes written on her mighty heart, the old crowned lioness of England coiled herself up in her lair, refused food, and died, and took her place henceforth opposite to her 'dear cousin' whom she really tried to save from herself—who would have slain her if she could, and whom she had at last, in obedience to the voice of the people of England, to slay against her will. They have made up that quarrel now.

Ay, and that tomb is the sacred symbol of a reconciliation even more pathetic and more strange. Elizabeth lies—seemingly by her own desire—in the same vault as her own sister, Mary Tudor. 'Bloody

Mary,' now, no more. James the First, who had no love for either of them, has placed at the head of the monument 'two lines,' as has been well said, 'full of a far deeper feeling than we should naturally have ascribed to him'—

'Fellows in the kingdom, and in the tomb, Here we sleep; Mary and Elizabeth the sisters; in hope of the resurrection.'

I make no comment on those words; or on that double sepulchre. But did I not say well, that the great Abbey was a place of peace—a place to remind hardworked, purblind, and often, alas! embittered souls—

> For Mother Earth she gathers all
> Into her bosom, great and small.
> Ah! could we look into her face,
> We should not shrink from her embrace.

Yes, all old misunderstandings are cleared up by now in that just world wherein all live to God. They live to God; and therefore the great Abbey is to me awful indeed, but never sad. Awful it ought to be, for it is a symbol of both worlds, the seen and the unseen; and of the veil, as thin as cobweb, yet opaque as night, which parts the two. Awful it is; and ought to be—like that with which it grew—the life of a great nation, growing slowly to manhood, as all great nations grow, through ignorance

and waywardness, often through sin and sorrow; hewing onward a devious track through unknown wildernesses; and struggling, victorious, though with bleeding feet, athwart the tangled woods and thorny brakes of stern experience.

Awful it is; and should be. And, therefore, I at least do not regret that its very form, outside, should want those heaven-pointing spires, that delicate lightness, that airy joyousness, of many a foreign cathedral —even of our own Salisbury and Lichfield. You will see in its outer shape little, if any, of that type of architecture which was, as I believe, copied from scenery with which you, as Americans, must be even more familiar than were the mediæval architects who travelled through the German forests and across the Alps to Rome. True, we have our noble high-pitched snow-roof. Our architect, like the rest, had seen the mountain ranges jut black and bare above the snows of winter. He had seen those snows slip down in sheets, rush down in torrents from the sun, off the steep slabs of rock which coped the hill-side; and he, like the rest, has copied in that roof, for use as well as beauty, the mountain rocks.

But he has not, as many another mediæval architect has done, decked his roofs as Nature has decked hers, with the spruce and fir-tree spires, which cling to the hill-side of the crag, old above young, pinnacle above pinnacle, whorl above whorl; and clothed with

them the sides and summit of the stone mountain which he had raised, till, like a group of firs upon an isolated rock, every point of the building should seem in act to grow toward heaven, and the grey leads of the Minster roof stand out amid peaks and turrets rich with carven foliage, as the grey rocks stand out of the primæval woods.

That part of the mediæval builder's task was left unfinished, and indeed hardly attempted, by our Westminster architects, either under Henry III., Edward I., or Henry V.

Their Minster is grand enough by grave height and severe proportion; and he who enters stooping under that low-browed arch of the north door, beneath the beetling crag of weatherworn and crumbling stone, may feel like one who, in some old northern fairy tale, enters a cave in some lone mountain side where trolls and dragons guard the hoards of buried kings.

And awful it is, and should be still, inside; under that vaulted roof a hundred feet above, all more mysterious and more huge, and yet more soft, beneath the murky London air.

But sad I cannot call it. Nor, I think, would you feel it sad, when you perceive how richly successive architects have squandered on it the treasures of their fancy; and made it, so they say, perhaps the most splendid specimen in the world of one of those stone

forests, in which the men of old delighted to reproduce those leafy minsters which God, not man, has built; where they sent the columns aloft like the boles of giant trees, and wreathed their capitals, sometimes their very shafts, with vines and flowers; and decked with foliage and with fruit the bosses above and the corbels below; and sent up out of those corbels upright shafts along the walls, in likeness of the trees which sprang out of the rocks above their head; and raised those walls into great cliffs; and pierced those cliffs with the arches of the triforium, as with wild creatures' caves or hermits' cells; and represented in the horizontal string-courses and window-sills the strata of the rocks; and opened the windows into wide and lofty glades, broken, as in the forest, by the tracery of stems and boughs, through which were seen, not only the outer, but the upper world. For they craved—as all true artists crave—for light and colour; and had the sky above been one perpetual blue, they might have been content with it, and left their glass transparent. But in our dark dank northern clime, rain and snowstorm, black cloud and grey mist, were all that they were like to see outside for six months in the year. So they took such light and colour as nature gave in her few gayer moods, and set aloft in their stained glass windows the hues of the noonday and of the sunset, and the purple of the heather, and the gold of the gorse, and

the azure of the bugloss, and the crimson of the poppy; and among them, in gorgeous robes, the angels and the saints of heaven, and the memories of heroic virtues and heroic sufferings, that they might lift up the eyes and hearts of men for ever out of the dark sad world of the cold north, with all its coarsenesses and its crimes, towards a realm of perpetual holiness, amid a perpetual summer of beauty and of light: as one who, from between the black jaws of a narrow glen, or from beneath the black shade of gigantic trees, catches a glimpse of far lands gay with gardens and cottages; and purple mountain ranges; and the far-off sea; and the hazy horizon melting into the hazy sky; and finds his soul led forth into an infinite, at once of freedom and repose.

Awful, and yet not sad; at least to one who is reminded by it, even in its darkest winter's gloom, of the primæval tropic forest at its two most exquisite moments—its too brief twilight, and its too swift dawn.

Awful, and yet not sad; at least to an Englishman, while right and left are ranged the statues, the busts, the names, the deeds, of men who have helped, each in his place, to make my country, and your country too, that which they are.

For am I not in goodly company? Am I not in very deed upon my best behaviour? among my betters? and at court? Among men before whom I

should have been ashamed to say or do a base or foolish thing? Among men who have taught me, have ennobled me, though they lived centuries since? Men whom I should have loved had I met them on earth? Men whom I may meet yet, and tell them how I love them, in some other world? Men, too, whom I might have hated, and who might have hated me, had we met on this poor piecemeal earth; but whom I may learn to regard with justice and with charity in the world where all shall know, even as they are known? Men, too—alas! how fast their number grows—whom I have known, have loved, and lost too soon; and all gleaming out of the gloom, as every image of the dead should do, in pure white marble, as if purged from earthly taint? To them, too—

> Nothing is left of them
> Now but pure manly.

Yes, while their monuments remind me that they are not dead, but living—for all live to God—then awed I am, and humbled; better so: but sad I cannot be in such grand company.

I said, the men who helped to make my country, and yours too. It would be an impertinence in me to remind most of you of that. You know as well as I that you are represented just as much as the English people, by every monument in that

Abbey earlier than the Civil Wars, and by most monuments of later date, especially by those of all our literary men. You know that, and you value the old Abbey accordingly. But a day may come—a generation may come, in a nation so rapidly increasing by foreign immigration, as well as by home-born citizenship—a generation may come who will forget that fact; and orators arise who will be glad that it should be forgotten—for awhile. But if you would not that that evil day should come then teach your children—That the history and the freedom of America began neither with the War of Independence, nor with the sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers, nor with the settlement of Virginia; but 1500 years and more before, in the days when our common Teutonic ancestors, as free then as this day, knew how

> In den Deutschen Forsten
> Wie der Aar zu horsten,

when Herman smote the Romans in the Teutoburger-Wald, and the great Cæsar wailed in vain to his slain general, 'Varus, give me back my legions!' Teach your children that the Congress which sits at Washington is as much the child of Magna Charta as the Parliament which sits at Westminster; and that when you resisted the unjust demands of an English king and council, you did but that which the

free commons of England held the right to do, and did, not only after, but before, the temporary tyranny of the Norman kings.

Show them the tombs of English kings; not of those Norman kings—no Norman king lies buried in our Abbey—there is no royal interment between Edward the Confessor, the last English prince of Cerdic's house, and Henry the Third, the first of the new English line of kings. Tell them, in justice to our common forefathers, that those men were no tyrants, but *kings*, who swore to keep, and for the most part did keep, like loyal gentlemen, the ancient English laws, which they had sworn in Westminster Abbey to maintain; and that the few of them who persisted in outraging the rights or the conscience of the free people of England, paid for their perjury with their crowns, or with their lives. And tell them, too, in justice to our common ancestors, that there were never wanting to the kings, the nobles, or the commons of England, since the days when Simon de Montfort organised the House of Commons in Westminster Hall, on the 2nd of May, 1258—there were never wanting, I say, to the kings, the nobles, or the commons of England, counsellors who dared speak the truth and defend the right, even at the risk of their own goods and their own lives.

Remind them, too—or let our monuments remind

them—that even in the worst times of the War of Independence, there were not wanting, here in England, statesmen who dared to speak out for justice and humanity; and that they were not only confessed to be the leading men of their own day, but the very men whom England delighted to honour by places in her Pantheon. Show them the monuments of Chatham, Pitt, and Fox—Burke sleeps in peace elsewhere—and remind them that the great earl, who literally died as much in your service as in ours, whose fiery invectives against the cruelties of that old war are, I am proud to say, still common-places for declamation among our English schoolboys, dared, even when all was at the worst, to tell the English House of Lords —'If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—never, never, never!'

Yes—an American as well as an Englishman may find himself in the old Abbey in right good company.

Yes—and I do not hesitate to say, that if you will look through the monuments erected in that Abbey, since those of Pitt and Fox—you will find that the great majority commemorate the children, not of obstruction, but of progress; not of darkness, but of light.

Holland, Tierney, Mackintosh, Grattan, Peel, Canning, Palmerston, Isaac Watts, Bell, Wilberforce, Sharp, the Macaulays, Fowell Buxton, Francis Horner,

Charles Buller, Cobden, Watt, Rennell, Telford, Locke, Brunel, Grote, Thackeray, Dickens, Maurice—men who, each in his own way, toiled for freedom of some kind; freedom of race, of laws, of commerce, of locomotion, of production, of speech, of thought, of education, of human charity, and of sympathy—these are the men whom England still delights to honour; whose busts around our walls show that the ancient spirit is not dead, and that we, as you, are still, as 1500 years ago, the sons of freedom and of light.

But, beside these statesmen who were just and true to you, and therefore to their native land, there lie men before whose monuments I would ask thoughtful Americans to pause—I mean those of our old fighters, by land and sea. I do not speak merely of those who lived before our Civil Wars, though they are indeed our common heritage. And when you look at the noble monuments of De Vere and Norris, the fathers of the English infantry, you should remember that your ancestors and mine, or that of any other Englishman, may have trailed pike and handled sword side by side under those very men, in those old wars of the Netherlands, which your own great historian, Mr. Motley, has so well described; or have sailed together to Cadiz fight, and to the Spanish Main, with Raleigh or with Drake.

There are those, again, who did their duty two and three generations later—though one of the noblest of

them all, old Admiral Blake, alas! lies we know not where—cast out, with Cromwell and his heroes, by the fanatics and sycophants of the Restoration—whom not only we, but Royalty itself, would now restore, could we recover their noble ashes, to their rightful resting-place.

And these, if not always our common ancestors, were, often enough, our common cousins, as in the case of my own family, in which one brother was settling in New England, to found there a whole new family of Kingsleys while the other brother was fighting in the Parliamentary army, and helping to defeat Charles at Rowton Moor.

But there is another class of warriors' tombs, which I ask you, if ever you visit the Abbey, to look on with respect, and let me say, affection too. I mean the men who did their duty, by land and sea, in that long series of wars which, commencing in 1739, ended in 1783, with our recognition of your right and power to be a free and independent people. Of those who fought against you I say nought. But I must speak of those who fought for you—who brought to naught, by sheer hard blows, that family compact of the House of Bourbon, which would have been as dangerous to you upon this side of the ocean as to us upon the other; who smote with a continual stroke the trans-Atlantic power of Spain, till they placed her once vast and rich possessions at your mercy to

this day; and who—even more important still—prevented the French from seizing at last the whole valley of the Mississippi, and girdling your nascent dominion with a hostile frontier, from Louisiana round to the mouth of the St. Lawrence.

When you see Wolfe's huge cenotaph, with its curious bronze bas-relief of the taking of the heights of Abraham, think, I pray you, that not only for England, but for you, the 'little red-haired corporal' conquered and died.

Remember, too, that while your ancestors were fighting well by land, and Washington and such as he were learning their lesson at Fort Duquesne and elsewhere better than we could teach them, we were fighting well where we knew how to fight—at sea. And when, near to Wolfe's monument, or in the Nave, you see such names as Cornwallis, Saumarez, Wager, Vernon—the conqueror of Portobello—Lord Aubrey Beauclerk, and so forth—bethink you that every French or Spanish ship which these men took, and every convoy they cut off, from Toulon to Carthagena, and from Carthagena to Halifax, made more and more possible the safe severance from England of the very Colonies which you were then helping us to defend. And then agree, like the generous-hearted people which you are, that if, in after years, we sinned against you—and how heavy were our sins, I know too well—there was a time, before those evil days, when

we fought for you, and by your side, as the old lion by the young; even though, like the old lion and the young, we began, only too soon, tearing each other to pieces over the division of the prey.

Nay, I will go further, and say this, paradoxical as it may seem :—When you enter the North Transept from St. Margaret's Churchyard you see on your right hand a huge but not ungraceful naval monument of white marble, inscribed with the names of Bayne, Blair, Lord Robert Manners—three commanders of Rodney's, in the crowning victory of April 12, 1782—fought upon Tropic waters, over which I have sailed, flushed with the thought that my own grandfather was that day on board of Rodney's ship.

Now do you all know what that day's great fight meant for you,—fought though it was, while you, alas! were still at war with us? It meant this. That that day—followed up, six months after, by Lord Howe's relief of Gibraltar—settled, I hold, the fate of the New World for many a year. True, in one sense, it was settled already. Cornwallis had already capitulated at York Town. But even then the old lion, disgraced, bleeding, fainting, ready to yield—but only to you, of his own kin and blood—struck, though with failing paw, two such tremendous blows at his old enemies, as deprived them thenceforth of any real power in the New World; precipitated that bankruptcy and ruin which issued in the French and

Spanish revolutions; and made certain, as I believe, the coming day when the Anglo-Saxon race shall be the real masters of the whole New World.

Of poets and of men of letters I say nought. They are the heritage, neither of us, nor you, but of the human race. The mere man of letters may well sleep in the very centre of that busy civilisation from which he drew his inspiration: but not the poet—not, at least, the poet of these days. He goes not to the town, but nature, for his inspirations, and to nature when he dies he should return. Such men—artificial, and town-bred—however brilliant, or even grand at times—as Davenant, Dryden, Cowley, Congreve, Prior, Gay—sleep fitly in our care here. Yet even Pope—though one of such in style and heart—preferred the parish church of the then rural Twickenham, and Gray the lonely graveyard of Stoke Pogis. Ben Jonson has a right to lie with us. He was a townsman to the very heart, and a court-poet too. But Chaucer, Spenser, Drayton—such are, to my mind, out of place. Chaucer lies here, because he lived hard by. Spenser through bitter need and woe. But I should have rather buried Chaucer in some trim garden, Spenser beneath the forest aisles, and Drayton by some silver stream—each man's dust resting where his heart was set. Happier, it seems to me, are those who like Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Southey, Scott and Burns, lie far away, in scenes

they knew and loved; fulfilling Burke's wise choice: 'After all I had sooner sleep in the southern corner of a country churchyard than in the tomb of all the Capulets.'

Yes—these worthies, one and all, are a token that the Great Abbey, and all its memories of 800 years, does not belong to us alone, nor even to the British Empire alone and all its Colonies, but to America likewise! That when an American enters beneath that mighty shade, he treads on common and ancestral ground, as sacred to him as it is to us; the symbol of common descent, common development, common speech, common creed, common laws, common literature, common national interests, and I trust, of a common respect and affection, such as the wise can only feel toward the wise, and the strong toward the strong.

Is all this sentiment? Remember what I said just now: by well-used sentiment, and well-used sorrow, great nations live.

## LECTURE II.

### THE STAGE AS IT WAS ONCE.

WHAT the Stage is now, I presume, all know. I am not myself a playgoer, but I am informed that, in Europe at least, it is not in a state to arouse any deep interest or respect in any cultivated or virtuous person. Meanwhile, keeping fast to my intention of talking to you only about things worthy of your interest and respect, because they are good, true, and beautiful, I wish to tell you what the Stage was once, in a republic of the past—what it may be again, I sometimes dream, in some republic of the future.

Let me take you back in fancy some 2314 years —440 years before the Christian era, and try to sketch for you—alas! how clumsily—a great, though tiny people, in one of their greatest moments—in one of the greatest moments, it may be, of the human race. For surely it is a great and a rare moment for humanity, when all that is loftiest in it—when reverence for the Unseen powers, reverence for the heroic dead, reverence for the father-land; and that rever-

ence, too, for self, which is expressed in stateliness and self-restraint, in grace and courtesy; when all these, I say, can lend themselves, even for a day, to the richest enjoyment of life—to the enjoyment of beauty in form and sound, and of relaxation, not brutalizing, but ennobling.

Rare, alas! have such seasons been in the history of poor humanity. But when they have come, they have lifted it up one stage higher thenceforth. Men, having been such once, may become such again; and the work which such times have left behind them becomes immortal.

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

Let me take you to the then still unfinished theatre of Athens, hewn out of the limestone rock on the south-east slope of the Acropolis.

Above are the new marble buildings of the Parthenon, rich with the statues and bas-reliefs of Phidias and his scholars, gleaming white against the blue sky, with the huge bronze statue of Athené Promachos, fifty feet in height, towering up among the temples and colonnades. In front, and far below, gleams the blue sea, and Salamis beyond.

And there are gathered the people of Athens—50,000 of them, possibly, when the theatre was complete and full. If it be fine, they all wear garlands

on their heads. If the sun be too hot, they wear wide-brimmed straw hats. And if a storm comes on, they will take refuge in the porticos beneath; not without wine and cakes, for what they have come to see will last for many an hour, and they intend to feast their eyes and ears from sunrise to sunset. On the highest seats are slaves and freedmen, below them the free citizens; and on the lowest seats of all are the dignitaries of the republic—the priests, the magistrates, and the other καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ—the fair and good men—as the citizens of the highest rank were called, and with them foreign ambassadors and distinguished strangers. What an audience—the rapidest, subtlest, wittiest, down to the very cobblers and tinkers, the world has ever seen. And what noble figures on those front seats; Pericles, with Aspasia beside him, and all his friends—Anaxagoras the sage, Phidias the sculptor, and many another immortal artist; and somewhere among the free citizens, perhaps beside his father Sophroniscus the sculptor, a short, square, pugnosed boy of ten years old, looking at it all with strange eyes — 'who will be one day,' so said the Pythoness at Delphi, 'the wisest man in Greece' — sage, metaphysician, humourist, warrior, patriot, martyr—for his name is *Socrates*.

All are in their dresses of office; for this is not merely a day of amusement, but of religious ceremony; sacred to Dionysos—Bacchus, the inspiring

god, who raises men above themselves, for good—or for evil.

The evil, or at least the mere animal aspect of that inspiration, was to be seen in forms grotesque and sensuous enough in those very festivals, when the gayer and coarser part of the population, in town and country, broke out into frantic masquerade, of which that silly carnival of Rome is perhaps the last paltry and unmeaning relic. 'When,' as the learned O. Müller says, 'the desire of escaping from self into something new and strange, of living in an imaginary world, broke forth in a thousand ways; not merely in revelry and solemn, though fantastic songs, but in a hundred disguises, imitating the subordinate beings —satyrs, pans, and nymphs, by whom the god was surrounded, and through whom life seemed to pass from him into vegetation, and branch off into a variety of beautiful or grotesque forms—beings who were ever present to the fancy of the Greeks, as a convenient step by which they could approach more nearly to the presence of the Divinity.' But even out of that seemingly bare chaos, Athenian genius was learning how to construct, under Eupolis, Cratinus and Aristophanes, that elder school of comedy, which remains not only unsurpassed, but unapproachable, save by Rabelais alone, as the ideal cloudland of masquerading wisdom, in which the whole universe goes mad—but with a subtle method in its madness.

Yes, so it has been, under some form or other, in every race and clime—ever since Eve ate of the magic fruit, that she might be as a god, knowing good and evil, and found, poor thing, as most have since, that it was far easier and more pleasant to know the evil than to know the good. But that theatre was built that men might know therein the good as well as the evil. To learn the evil, indeed, according to their light, and the sure vengeance of Até and the Furies which tracks up the evil-doer. But to learn also the good—lessons of piety, patriotism, heroism, justice, mercy, self-sacrifice, and all that comes out of the hearts of men and women not dragged *below*, but raised *above* themselves; and behind all—at least in the nobler and earlier tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles, before Euripides had introduced the tragedy of mere human passion; that sensation tragedy, which is the only one the world knows now, and of which the world is growing rapidly tired—behind all, I say, lessons of the awful and unfathomable mystery of human existence, of unseen destiny; of that seemingly capricious distribution of weal and woe, to which we can find no solution on this side the grave, for which the old Greek could find no solution whatsoever.

Therefore there was a central object in the old Greek theatre, most important to it, but which does not exist in our theatres, and did not in the old

Roman; because our tragedies, like the Roman, are mere plays concerning love, murder, and so forth, while the Greek were concerning the deepest relations of man to the Unseen.

The almost circular orchestra, or pit, between the benches and the stage, was empty of what we call spectators—because it was destined for the true and ideal spectators—the representatives of humanity; in its centre was a round platform, the θυμελή—originally the altar of Bacchus—from which the leader of these representatives, the leader of the Chorus, could converse with the actors on the stage and take his part in the drama; and round this thymelé the Chorus ranged, with measured dance and song, chanting, to the sound of a simple flute, odes such as the world had never heard before or since, save perhaps in the temple-worship at Jerusalem. A chorus now, as you know, means merely any number of persons singing in full harmony on any subject. The Chorus was then in tragedy, and indeed in the higher comedy, what Schlegel well calls 'the ideal spectator,'—a personified reflection on the action going on, the incorporation into the representation itself of the sentiments of the poet, as the spokesman of the whole human race. He goes on to say (and I think truly), 'that the Chorus always retained among the Greeks a peculiar national signification, publicity being, according to

their republican notions, essential to the completeness of every important transaction.' Thus the Chorus represented idealised public opinion: not of course, the shifting, hasty public opinion of the moment—to that it was a conservative check, and it calmed to soberness and charity—for it was the matured public opinion of centuries; the experience, and usually the sad experience, of many generations; the very spirit of the Greek race.

The Chorus might be composed of what the poet would. Of ancient citizens, waiting for their sons to come back from the war, as in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus; of sea-nymphs, as in his *Prometheus Bound*; even of the very Furies who hunt the matricide, as in his *Eumenides*; of Senators as in the *Antigone* of Sophocles; or of village farmers as in his *Œdipus at Colonos*—and now I have named five of the greatest poems, as I hold, written by mortal man till Dante rose. Or it may be the Chorus was composed—as in the comedies of Aristophanes, the greatest humourist the world has ever seen—of birds, or of frogs, or even of clouds. It may rise to the level of Don Quixote, or sink to that of Sancho Panza; for it is always the incarnation of such wisdom, heavenly or earthly, as the poet wishes the people to bring to bear on the subject-matter.

But let the poets themselves, rather than me, speak awhile. Allow me to give you a few specimens of

these choruses—the first as an example of that practical, and yet surely not un-divine wisdom, by which they supplied the place of our modern preacher, or essayist, or didactic poet.

Listen to this of the old men's chorus in the *Agamemnon*, in the spirited translation of my friend Professor Blackie :—

'Twas said of old, and 'tis said to-day,
That wealth to prosperous stature grown
Begets a birth of its own :
That a surfeit of evil by good is prepared,
And sons must bear what allotment of woe
Their sires were spared.
But this I refuse to believe : I know
That impious deeds conspire
To beget an offspring of impious deeds
Too like their ugly sire.
But whoso is just, though his wealth like a river
Flow down, shall be scathless: his house shall rejoice
In an offspring of beauty for ever.

The heart of the haughty delights to beget
A haughty heart. From time to time
In children's children recurrent appears
The ancestral crime.
When the dark hour comes that the gods have decreed
And the Fury burns with wrathful fires,
A demon unholy, with ire unabated,
Lies like black night on the halls of the fated ;
And the recreant Son plunges guiltily on
To perfect the guilt of his Sires.

But Justice shines in a lowly cell;
In the homes of poverty, smoke-begrimed,
With the sober-minded she loves to dwell.
But she turns aside
From the rich man's house with averted eye,
The golden-fretted halls of pride
Where hands with lucre are foul, and the praise
Of counterfeit goodness smoothly sways;
And wisely she guides in the strong man's despite
All things to an issue of RIGHT.

Let me now give you another passage from the *Eumenides*—or *Furies*, of Æschylus.

Orestes, prince of Argos, you must remember, has avenged on his mother Clytemnestra the murder of his father, king Agamemnon, on his return from Troy. Pursued by the Furies, he takes refuge in the temple of Apollo at Delphi, and then, still Fury-haunted, goes to Athens, where Pallas Athené the warrior-maiden, the tutelary goddess of Athens, bids him refer his cause to the Areopagus, the highest court of Athens, Apollo acting as his advocate, and she sitting as umpire in the midst. The white and black balls are thrown into the urn, and are equal; and Orestes is only delivered by the decision of Athené—as the representative of the nearer race of gods, the Olympians, the friends of man, in whose likeness man is made. The Furies are the representatives of the older and darker creed—which yet has a depth of

truth in it—of the irreversible dooms which underlie all nature; and which represent the *Law*, and not the Gospel, the consequence of the mere act, independent of the spirit which has prompted it.

They break out in fury against the overbearing arrogance of these younger gods. Athené bears their rage with equanimity, addresses them in the language of kindness, even of veneration, till these so indomitable beings are unable to withstand the charm of her mild eloquence. They are to have a sanctuary in the Athenian land, and to be called no more Furies (Erinnys), but Eumenides—the *well-conditioned*—the kindly goddesses. And all ends with a solemn procession round the orchestra, with hymns of blessing, while the terrible Chorus of the Furies, clothed in black, with blood-stained girdles, and serpents in their hair, in masks having perhaps somewhat of the terrific beauty of Medusa-masks, are convoyed to their new sanctuary by a procession of children, women, and old men in purple robes and torches in their hands, after Athené and the Furies have sung, in response to each other, a chorus from which I must beg leave to give you an extract or two.

*Eldest Fury* (*Leader of the Chorus*).

Far from thy dwelling, and far from thy border,
By the grace of my godhead benignant I order
The blight which may blacken the bloom of the trees.
Far from thy border, and far from thy dwelling,

Be the hot blast which shrivels the bud in its swelling,
The seed-rotting taint, and the creeping disease.
Thy flocks be still doubled, thy seasons be steady,
And when Hermes is near thee, thy hand be still ready
The Heaven-dropt bounty to seize.

*Athené.*

Hear her words, my city's warders—
Fraught with blessings, she prevaileth
With Olympians and Infernals,
Dread Erinnys much revered.
Mortal faith she guideth plainly
To what goal she pleaseth, sending
Songs to some, to others days
With tearful sorrows dulled.

*Furies.*

Far from thy border
The lawless disorder
That sateless of evil shall reign ;
Far from thy dwelling,
The dear blood welling,
That taints thine own hearth with the slain.
When slaughter from slaughter
Shall flow like the water,
And rancour from rancour shall grow.
But joy with joy blending,
Live, each to all lending ;
And hating one-hearted the foe.
When bliss hath departed ;
From love single-hearted,
A fountain of healing shall flow.

*Athené.*

Wisely now the tongue of kindness
Thou hast found, the way of love.
And these terror-speaking faces
Now look wealth to me and mine.
Her so willing, ye more willing,
Now receive. This land and city,
On ancient right securely throned,
Shall shine for evermore.

*Furies.*

Hail, and all hail, mighty people, be greeted,
On the sons of Athena shines sunshine the clearest.
Blest people, near Jove the Olympian seated.
And dear to the maiden his daughter the dearest.
Timely wise 'neath the wings of the daughter ye gather,
And mildly looks down on her children the Father.

Those of you here who love your country as well as the old Athenians loved theirs, will feel at once the grand political significance of such a scene, in which patriotism and religion become one—and feel, too, the exquisite dramatic effect of the innocent, the weak, the unwarlike, welcoming among them, without fear, because without guilt, those ancient snaky-haired sisters, emblems of all that is most terrible and most inscrutable, in the destiny of nations, of families, and of men:

To their hallowed habitations
'Neath Ogygian earth's foundations
In that darksome hall

Sacrifice and supplication
Shall not fail. In adoration
Silent worship all.

Listen again, to the gentler patriotism of a gentler poet, Sophocles himself. The village of Colonos, a mile from Athens, was his birthplace; and in his *Œdipus Coloneus*, he makes his Chorus of village officials sing thus of their consecrated olive grove:

In good hap, stranger, to these rural seats
Thou comest, to this region's blest retreats,
Where white Colonos lifts his head,
And glories in the bounding steed.
Where sadly sweet the frequent nightingale
Impassioned pours his evening song,
And charms with varied notes each verdant vale,
The ivy's dark-green boughs among,
Or sheltered 'neath the clustering vine
Which, high above him form a bower,
Safe from the sun or stormy shower,
Where frolic Bacchus often roves,
And visits with his fostering nymphs the groves.

Bathed in the dew of heaven each morn,
Fresh is the fair Narcissus born,
Of those great gods the crown of old;
The crocus glitters, robed in gold.
Here restless fountains ever murmuring glide,
And as their crispèd streamlets play,
To feed, Cephisus, thine unfailing tide,
Fresh verdure marks their winding way.
Here oft to raise the tuneful song
The virgin band of Muses deigns,
And car-borne Aphrodite guides her golden reins.

Then they go on, this band of village elders, to praise the gods for their special gifts to that small Athenian land. They praise Pallas Athené, who gave their forefathers the olive; then Poseidon—Neptune, as the Romans call him—who gave their forefathers the horse; and something more—the ship,—the horse of the sea, as they, like the old Norse Vikings after them, delighted to call it.—

> Our highest vaunt is this—Thy grace,
> Poseidon, we behold.
> The ruling curb, embossed with gold,
> Controls the courser's managed pace.
> Though loud, oh king, thy billows roar,
> Our strong hands grasp the labouring oar,
> And while the Nereids round it play,
> Light cuts our bounding bark its way.

What a combination of fine humanities! Dance and song, patriotism and religion, so often parted among us, have flowed together into one in these stately villagers; each a small farmer; each a trained soldier, and probably a trained seaman also; each a self-governed citizen; and each a cultured gentleman, if ever there were gentlemen on earth.

But what drama, doing, or action—for such is the meaning of the word—is going on upon the the stage, to be commented on by the sympathizing Chorus?

One drama, at least, was acted in Athens in that year—440 B.C.—which you, I doubt not, know well—

that *Antigone* of Sophocles, which Mendelssohn has resuscitated, in our own generation, by setting it to music, divine indeed, though very different from the music to which it was set, probably by Sophocles himself, at its first, and for ought we know, its only representation. For pieces had not then, as now, a run of a hundred nights and more. The Athenian genius was so fertile, and the Athenian audience so eager for novelty, that new pieces were demanded, and were forthcoming, for each of the great festivals, and if a piece was represented a second time it was usually after an interval of some years. They did not, moreover, like the moderns, run every night to some theatre or other, as a part of the day's amusement. Tragedy, and even comedy, were serious subjects, calling out, not a passing sigh, or passing laugh, but all the higher faculties and emotions. And as serious subjects were to be expressed in verse and music, which gave stateliness, doubtless, even to the richest burlesques of Aristophanes, and lifted them out of mere street-buffoonery into an ideal fairy land of the grotesque, how much more stateliness must verse and music have added to their tragedy! And how much have we lost, toward a true appreciation of their dramatic art, by losing almost utterly not only the laws of their melody and harmony, but even the true metric time of their odes! music and metre, which must have surely been as noble as their poetry, their sculpture, their archi-

tecture, possessed by the same exquisite sense of form and of proportion. One thing we can understand —how this musical form of the drama, which still remains to us in lower shapes, in the oratorio, in the opera, must have helped to raise their tragedies into that ideal sphere in which they all, like the *Antigone*, live and move. So ideal and yet so human; nay rather, truly ideal, because truly human. The gods, the heroes, the kings, the princesses of Greek tragedy were dear to the hearts of Greek republicans, not merely as the founders of their states, not merely as the tutelary deities, many of them, of their country: but as men and women like themselves, only more vast; with mightier wills, mightier virtues, mightier sorrows, and often mightier crimes; their inward free-will battling, as Schlegel has well seen, against outward circumstance and overruling fate, as every man should battle, unless he sink to be a brute. 'In tragedy,' says Schlegel—uttering thus a deep and momentous truth—'the gods themselves either come forward as the servants of destiny and mediate executors of its decrees, or approve themselves godlike only by asserting their liberty of action and entering upon the same struggles with fate which man himself has to encounter.' And I believe this, that this Greek tragedy, with its godlike men and manlike gods, and heroes who had become gods by the very vastness of their humanity, was a preparation, and it may be a necessary prepara-

tion, for the true Christian faith in a Son of man, who is at once utterly human and utterly divine. Man is made in the likeness of God—is the root-idea, only half-conscious, only half-expressed, but instinctive, without which neither the Greek Tragedies, nor the Homeric Poems, six hundred years before them, could have been composed. Doubtless the idea that man was like a god degenerated too often into the idea that the gods were like men, and as wicked. But that travestie of a great truth is not confined to those old Greeks. Some so-called Christian theories—as I hold —have sinned in that direction as deeply as the Athenians of old.

Meanwhile, I say, that this long acquiescence in the conception of godlike struggle, godlike daring, godlike suffering, godlike martyrdom; the very conception which was so foreign to the mythologies of any other race—save that of the Jews, and perhaps of our own Teutonic forefathers—did prepare, must have prepared, men to receive as most rational and probable, as the satisfaction of their highest instincts, the idea of a Being in whom all those partial rays culminated in clear, pure light; of a Being at once utterly human and utterly divine; who by struggle, suffering, self-sacrifice, without a parallel, achieved a victory over circumstance and all the dark powers which beleaguer man without a parallel likewise.

Take, as an example, the figure which you know

best—the figure of Antigone herself—devoting herself to be entombed alone, for the sake of love and duty. Love of a brother, which she can only prove, alas! by burying his corpse. Duty to the dead, an instinct depending on no written law, but springing out of the very depths of those blind and yet sacred monitions which prove that the true man is not an animal, but a spirit; fulfilling her holy purpose, unchecked by fear, unswayed by her sisters' entreaties. Hardening her heart magnificently till her fate is sealed; and then after proving her godlike courage, proving the tenderness of her womanhood by that melodious wail over her own untimely death and the loss of marriage joys, which some of you must know from the music of Mendelssohn, and which the late Dean Milman has put into English thus—

Come, fellow-citizens, and see
The desolate Antigone.
On the last path her steps shall tread,
Set forth, the journey of the dead,
Watching, with vainly lingering gaze,
Her last, last sun's expiring rays,

Never to see it, never more,
For down to Acheron's dread shore,
A living victim am I led
To Hades' universal bed.
To my dark lot no bridal joys
Belong, nor e'er the jocund noise

Of hymeneal chant shall sound for me,
But death, cold death, my only spouse shall be.

Oh tomb ! Oh bridal chamber ! Oh deep-delved
And strongly-guarded mansion ! I descend
To meet in your dread chambers all my kindred,
Who in dark multitudes have crowded down
Where Proserpine received the dead. But I,
The last, and oh how few more miserable,
Go down, or ere my sands of life are run.

And let me ask you whether the contemplation of such a self-sacrifice should draw you, should have drawn those who heard the tale nearer to, or further from, a certain cross which stood on Calvary some 1800 years ago? May not the tale of Antigone heard from mother or from nurse have nerved ere now some martyr-maiden to dare and suffer in an even holier cause?

But to return. This set purpose of the Athenian dramatists of the best school to set before men a magnified humanity, explains much in their dramas which seem to us at first not only strange but faulty. The masks which gave one grand but unvarying type of countenance to each well-known historic personage, and thus excluded the play of feature, animated gesture, and almost all which we now consider as 'acting' proper; the thicksoled cothurni, which gave the actor a more than human stature; the poverty (according to our notions) of the scenery, which usually repre-

sented merely the front of a palace or other public place, and was often though not always unchanged during the whole performance; the total absence in fact, of anything like that scenic illusion which most managers of theatres seem now to consider as their highest achievement; the small number of the actors, two, or at most three only, being present on the stage at once, —the simplicity of the action, in which intrigue (in the play-house sense) and any complication of plot are utterly absent; all this must have concentrated not the eye of the spectator on the scene, but his ear upon the voice, and his emotions on the personages who stood out before him without a background, sharp-cut and clear as a group of statuary which is the same, place it where you will, complete in itself—a world of beauty, independent of all other things and beings save on the ground on which it needs must stand. It was the personage rather than his surroundings, which was to be impressed by every word on the spectator's heart and intellect; and the very essence of Greek tragedy is expressed in the still famous words of Medea—

Che resta? Io.

Contrast this with the European drama—especially with the highest form of it—our own Elizabethan. It resembles, as has been often said in better words than mine, not statuary but painting. These dramas affect

colour, light, and shadow, background whether of town or country, description of scenery where scenic machinery is inadequate, all in fact, which can blend the action and the actors with the surrounding circumstances, without letting them altogether melt into the circumstances; which can show them a part of the great whole, by harmony or discord with the whole universe, down to the flowers beneath their feet. This, too, had to be done: how it became possible for even the genius of a Shakespeare to get it done, I may with your leave hint to you hereafter. Why it was not given to the Greeks to do it, I know not.

Let us at least thank them for what they did. One work was given them, and that one they fulfilled as it had never been fulfilled before; as it will never need to be fulfilled again; for the Greeks' work was done not for themselves alone but for all races in all times; and Greek Art is the heirloom of the whole human race; and that work was to assert in drama, lyric, sculpture, music, gymnastic, the dignity of man—the dignity of man which they perceived for the most part with their intense æsthetic sense, through the beautiful in man. Man with them was divine, inasmuch as he could perceive beauty and be beautiful himself. Beauty might be physical, æsthetic, intellectual, moral. But in proportion as a thing was perfect it revealed its own perfection by its beauty. Goodness itself was a form—though the highest form—of beauty. Καλὸς

meant both the physically beautiful and the morally good; *αἰσχρὸς* both the ugly and the bad.

Out of this root-idea sprang the whole of that Greek sculpture, which is still, and perhaps ever will be, one of the unrivalled wonders of the world.

Their first statues, remember, were statues of the gods. This is an historic fact. Before B.C. 580 there were probably no statues in Greece save those of deities. But of what form? We all know that the usual tendency of man has been to represent his gods as more or less monstrous. Their monstrosity may have been meant, as it was certainly with the Mexican idols, and probably those of the Semitic races of Syria and Palestine, to symbolise the ferocious passions which they attributed to those objects of their dread, appeasable alone by human sacrifice. Or the monstrosity, as with the hawk-headed or cat-headed Egyptian idols, the winged bulls of Nineveh and Babylon, the many-handed deities of Hindostan—merely symbolised powers which could not, so the priest and the sculptor held, belong to mere humanity. Now, of such monstrous forms of idols, the records in Greece are very few and very ancient—relics of an older worship, and most probably of an older race. From the earliest historic period, the Greek was discerning more and more that the divine could be best represented by the human; the tendency of his statuary was more and more to honour that divine, by embodying it in the highest human beauty.

In lonely mountain shrines there still might linger, feared and honoured, dolls like those black virgins, of unknown antiquity, which still work wonders on the European continent. In the mysterious cavern of Phigalia, for instance, on the Eleatic shore of Peloponnese, there may have been in remote times—so the legend ran—an old black wooden image, a woman with a horse's head and mane, and serpents growing round her head, who held a dolphin in one hand and a dove in the other. And this image may have been connected with old nature-myths about the marriage of Demeter and Poseidon—that is, of encroachments of the sea upon the land; and the other myths of Demeter, the earth-mother, may have clustered round the place, till the Phigalians were glad—for it was profitable as well as honourable—to believe that in their cavern Demeter sat mourning for the loss of Proserpine, whom Pluto had carried down to Hades, and all the earth was barren till Zeus sent the Fates, or Iris, to call her forth, and restore fertility to the world. And it may be true—the legend as Pausanias tells it 600 years after—that the old wooden idol having been burnt, and the worship of Demeter neglected till a famine ensued, the Phigalians, warned by the Oracle of Delphi, hired Onatas, a contemporary of Polygnotus and Phidias, to make them a bronze replica of the old idol, from some old copy and from a dream of his own. The story may be

true. When Pausanias went thither, in the second century after Christ, the cave and the fountain, and the sacred grove of oaks, and the altar outside, which was to be polluted with the blood of no victim—the only offerings being fruits and honey, and undressed wool—were still there. The statue was gone. Some said it had been destroyed by the fall of the cliff; some were not sure that it had ever been there at all. And meanwhile Praxiteles had already brought to perfection (Paus. 1, 2, sec. 4) the ideal of Demeter, mother-like, as Heré—whom we still call Juno now—but softer-featured, and her eyes more closed.

And so for mother earth, as for the rest, the best representation of the divine was the human. Now, conceive such an idea taking hold, however slowly, of a people of rare physical beauty, of acutest eye for proportion and grace, with opportunities of studying the human figure such as exist nowhere now, save among tropic savages, and gifted, moreover, in that as in all other matters, with that innate diligence, of which Mr. Carlyle has said, 'that genius is only an infinite capacity of taking pains,' and we can understand somewhat of the causes which produced those statues, human and divine, which awe and shame the artificiality and degeneracy of our modern so-called civilisation — we can understand somewhat of the reverence for the human form, of the careful study of every line, the storing up for use each scattered frag-

ment of beauty of which the artist caught sight, even in his daily walks, and consecrating it in his memory to the service of him or her whom he was trying to embody in marble or in bronze. And when the fashion came in of making statues of victors in the games, and other distinguished persons, a new element was introduced, which had large social as well as artistic results. The sculptor carried his usual reverence into his careful delineation of the victor's form, while he obtained in him a model, usually of the very highest type, for perfecting his idea of some divinity. The possibility of gaining the right to a statue gave a fresh impulse to all competitors in the public games, and through them to the gymnastic training throughout all the states of Greece, which made the Greeks the most physically able and graceful, as well as the most beautiful people known to the history of the human race. A people who, reverencing beauty, reverenced likewise grace or acted beauty, so utterly and honestly, that nothing was too humble for a free man to do, if it were not done awkwardly and ill. As an instance, Sophocles himself—over and above his poetic genius, one of the most cultivated gentlemen, as well as one of the most exquisite musicians, dancers, and gymnasts, and one of the most just, pious, and gentle of all Greece—could not, by reason of the weakness of his voice, act in his own plays, as poets were wont to do, and had to perform only the

office of stage-manager. Twice he took part in the action, once as the blind old Thamyris playing on the harp, and once in his own lost tragedy, the 'Nausicaa.' There in the scene in which the Princess, as she does in Homer's 'Odyssey,' comes down to the sea-shore with her maidens to wash the household clothes, and then to play at ball—Sophocles himself, a man then of middle age, did the one thing he could do better than any there—and, dressed in women's clothes, among the lads who represented the maidens, played at ball before the Athenian people.

Yes: just 60 years after the representation of the *Antigone*, 10,000 Greeks, far on the plains of Babylon, cut through the whole Persian army, as the railway train cuts through a herd of buffalo, and then losing all their generals by treacherous warfare, fought their way north from Babylon to Trebizond on the Black Sea, under the guidance of a young Athenian, a pupil of Socrates, who had never served in the army before. The retreat of Xenophon and his 10,000 will remain for ever as one of the grandest triumphs of civilisation over brute force: but what made it possible? That these men, and their ancestors before them, had been for at least 100 years in *training*, physical, intellectual, and moral, which made their bodies and their minds able to dare and suffer like those old heroes of whom their tragedy had taught them, and whose spirits they still believed would help the

valiant Greek. And yet that feat, which looks to us so splendid, attracted, as far as I am aware, no special admiration at the time. So was the cultivated Greek expected to behave whenever he came in contact with the uncultivated barbarian.

But from what had sprung in that little state, this exuberance of splendid life, physical, æsthetic, intellectual, which made, and will make the name of Athens and of the whole cluster of Greek republics for ever admirable to civilised man? Had it sprung from long years of peaceful prosperity? From infinite making of money and comfort, according to the laws of so-called political economy, and the dictates of enlightened selfishness? Not so. But rather out of terror and agony, and all but utter ruin—and out of a magnificent want of economy—and the divine daring and folly—of self-sacrifice.

In Salamis across the strait a trophy stood, and round that trophy, forty years before, Sophocles the author of *Antigone*, then sixteen years of age, the loveliest and most cultivated lad in Athens, undraped like a faun, with lyre in hand, was leading the Chorus of Athenian youths, and singing to Athené, the tutelary goddess, a hymn of triumph for a glorious victory,—the very symbol of Greece and Athens, springing up into a joyous second youth after invasion and desolation, as the grass springs up after the prairie fire has passed. But the fire had

been terrible. It had burnt Athens at least, down to the very roots. True, while Sophocles was dancing, Xerxes, the great king of the East, foiled at Salamis, as his father Darius had been foiled at Marathon ten years before, was fleeing back to Persia, leaving his innumerable hosts of slaves and mercenaries to be destroyed piecemeal, by land at Platea, by sea at Mycalé. The bold hope was over, in which the Persian, ever since the days of Cyrus, had indulged—that he, the despot of the East, should be the despot of the West likewise. It seemed to them as possible, though not as easy, to subdue the Aryan Greek, as it had been to subdue the Semite and the Turanian, the Babylonian, and the Syrian; to rifle his temples, to destroy his idols, carry off his women and children as colonists into distant lands, as they had been doing with all the nations of the East. And they had succeeded with isolated colonies, isolated islands of Greeks, and the shores of Asia Minor. But when they dared, at last, to attack the Greek in his own sacred land of Hellas, they found they had bearded a lion in his den. Nay rather—as those old Greeks would have said—they had dared to attack Pallas Athené, the eldest daughter of Zeus—emblem of that serene and pure divine wisdom, of whom Solomon sang of old: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He appointed the foundation

of the earth, then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; *and my delight was with the sons of men*,'—to attack her and her brother Apollo, Lord of light, and beauty, and culture, and grace, and inspiration,—to attack them, not in the name of Ormuzd, nor of any other deity, but in the name of mere brute force and lust of conquest. The old Persian spirit was gone out of them. They were the symbols now of nothing save despotism and self-will, wealth and self-indulgence. They, once the children of Ormuzd or light, had become the children of Ahriman or darkness; and therefore it was, as I believe, that Xerxes' 1,000 ships, and the two million (or, as some have it, five million) human beings availed naught against the little fleets and little battalions of men who believed with a living belief in Athené and Apollo, and therefore—ponder it well, for it is true—with a living belief, under whatsoever confusions and divisions of personality, in a God who loved, taught, inspired men, a just God who befriended the righteous cause, the cause of freedom and patriotism, a Deity, the echo of whose mind and will to man was the song of Athené on Olympus, when she

Chanted of order and right, and of foresight, and order of peoples;
Chanted of labour and craft, wealth in the port and the garner;

Chanted of valour and fame, and the man who can fall with the foremost,
Fighting for children and wife, and the field which his father bequeathed him.
Sweetly and cunningly sang she, and planned new lessons for mortals.
Happy who hearing obey her, the wise unsullied Athené.

Ah, that they had always obeyed her, those old Greeks. But meanwhile, as I said, the agony had been extreme. If Athens had sinned, she had been purged as by fire; and the fire—surely of God—had been terrible. Northern Greece had either been laid waste with fire and sword, or had gone over to the Persian, traitors in their despair. Attica, almost the only loyal state, had been overrun; the old men, women, and children had fled to the neighbouring islands, or to the Peloponnese. Athens itself had been destroyed; and while young Sophocles was dancing round the trophy at Salamis, the Acropolis was still a heap of blackened ruins.

But over and above their valour, over and above their loyalty, over and above their exquisite æsthetic faculty, these Athenians had a resilience of self-reliant energy, like that of the French—like that, to do you but justice, of your Americans after your Chicago fire; and Athens rose from her ashes to be awhile, not only, as she had nobly earned by suffering and endurance, the leading state in Greece, but a mighty

fortress, a rich commercial port, a living centre of art, poetry, philosophy, such as this earth has never seen before or since.

On the plateau of that little crag of the Acropolis some 800 feet in length, by 400 in breadth—about the size and shape of the Castle Rock at Edinburgh —was gathered, within forty years of the battle of Salamis, more and more noble beauty than ever stood together on any other spot of like size.

The sudden relief from crushing pressure, and the joyous consciousness of well-earned honours, made the whole spirit-nature of the people blossom out, as it were, into manifold forms of activity, beauty, research, and raised, in raising Greece, the whole human race thenceforth.

What might they not have done—looking at what they actually did—for the whole race of man?

But no—they fell, even more rapidly than they rose, till their grace and their cultivation, for them they could not lose, made them the willing ministers to the luxury, the frivolity, the sentimentality, the vice of the whole old world—the Scapia or Figaro of the old world—infinitely able, but with all his ability consecrated to the service of his own base self. The Greekling—as Juvenal has it—in want of a dinner, would climb somehow to heaven itself, at the bidding of his Roman master.

Ah, what a fall! And what was the inherent weakness which caused that fall?

I say at once—want of honesty. The Greek was not to be depended on; if it suited him, he would lie, betray, overreach, change sides, and think it no sin. He was the sharpest of men. Sharp practice, in our modern sense of the word, was the very element in which he floated. Any scholar knows it. In the grand times of Marathon and Salamis, down to the disastrous times of the Peloponnesian war and the thirty tyrants, no public man's hands were clean, with the exception, perhaps, of that Aristides, who was banished because men were tired of hearing him called the Just. The exciting cause of the Peloponnesian war, and the consequent downfall of Athens, was not merely the tyranny she exercised over the states allied to her, it was the sharp practice of the Athenians, in misappropriating the tribute paid by the allies to the decoration of Athens. And in laying the foundations of the Parthenon was sown, by a just judgment, the seed of ruin for the state which gloried in it. And if the rulers were such, what were the people? If the free were such, what were the slaves?

Hence, weakness at home and abroad, mistrust of generals and admirals, paralysing all bold and clear action, peculations and corruptions at home, internecine wars between factions inside states, and between states or groups of states, revolutions followed by despotism, and final exhaustion and slavery,

—slavery to a people who were coming across the western sea, hard-headed, hard-hearted, caring nothing for art, or science, whose pleasures were coarse and cruel, but with a certain rough honesty, reverence for country, for law, and for the ties of a family —men of a somewhat old English type, who had over and above, like the English, the inspiring belief that they could conquer the whole world, and who very nearly succeeded in that—as we have, to our great blessing, not succeeded—I mean, of course, the Romans.

# LECTURE III.

## THE FIRST DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

LET me begin this lecture with a scene in the North Atlantic 863 years since.

'Bjarne Grimolfson was blown with his ship into the Irish Ocean; and there came worms and the ship began to sink under them. They had a boat which they had payed with seals' blubber, for that the sea-worms will not hurt. But when they got into the boat they saw that it would not hold them all. Then said Bjarne, "As the boat will only hold the half of us, my advice is that we should draw lots who shall go in her; for that will not be unworthy of our manhood." This advice seemed so good that none gainsaid it; and they drew lots. And the lot fell to Bjarne that he should go in the boat with half his crew. But as he got into the boat, there spake an Icelander who was in the ship and had followed Bjarne from Iceland, "Art thou going to leave me here, Bjarne?" Quoth Bjarne, "So it must be." Then said the man, "Another thing didst thou promise my father, when I

sailed with thee from Iceland, than to desert me thus. For thou saidst that we both should share the same lot." Bjarne said, "And that we will not do. Get thou down into the boat, and I will get up into the ship, now I see that thou art so greedy after life." So Bjarne went up into the ship, and the man down into the boat; and the boat went on its voyage till they came to Dublin in Ireland. But most men say that Bjarne and his comrades perished among the worms; for they were never heard of after.'

This story may serve as a text for my whole lecture. Not only does it smack of the sea-breeze and the salt water like all the finest old Norse sagas: but it gives a glimpse at least, of the nobleness which underlay the grim and often cruel nature of the Norseman. It belongs, too, to the culminating epoch, to the beginning of that era when the Scandinavian peoples had their great times; when the old fierceness of the worshippers of Thor and Odin was tempered, without being effeminated by the Faith of the 'White Christ,' till the very men who had been the destroyers of Western Europe became its civilisers.

It should have, moreover, a special interest to Americans. For—as American antiquaries are well aware—Bjarne was on his voyage home from the coast of New England; possibly from that very Mount Hope Bay, which seems to have borne the same name in the time of those old Norsemen, as afterwards in the days

of King Philip the last sachem of the Wampanong Indians. He was going back to Greenland, perhaps for reinforcements, finding, he and his fellow-captain, Thorfinn, the Esquimaux who then dwelt in that land too strong for them. For the Norsemen were then on the very edge of a discovery, which might have changed the history not only of this continent but of Europe likewise. They had found and colonised Iceland and Greenland. They had found Labrador, and called it Helluland, from its ice-polished rocks. They had found Nova Scotia seemingly and called it Markland from its woods. They had found New England and called it Vinland the Good. A fair land they found it, well wooded, with good pasturage ; so that they had already imported cows, and a bull whose lowings terrified the Esquimaux. They had found self-sown corn too, probably maize. The streams were full of salmon. But they had called the land Vinland, by reason of its grapes. Quaint enough, and bearing in its very quaintness the stamp of truth, is the story of the first finding of the wild fox-grapes. How Leif the Fortunate, almost as soon as he first landed, missed a little wizened old German servant of his father's, Tyrker by name, and was much vexed thereat, for he had been brought up on the old man's knee, and hurrying off to find him met Tyrker coming back twisting his eyes about—a trick of his—smacking his lips and talking German to himself in high

excitement. And when they get him to talk Norse again, he says, 'I have not been far, but I have news for you. I have found vines and grapes!' 'Is that true, foster-father?' says Leif. 'True it is,' says the old German, 'for I was brought up where there was never any lack of them.' The saga—as given by Rafn—has a detailed description of this quaint personage's appearance; and it would not be amiss if American wine-growers should employ an American sculptor—and there are great American sculptors—to render that description into marble, and set up little Tyrker in some public place, as the Silenus of the New World.

Thus the first cargoes homeward from Vinland to Greenland had been of timber and of raisins, and of vine-stocks which were not like to thrive.

And more. Beyond Vinland the Good there was said to be another land, Whiteman's Land—or Ireland the Mickle, as some called it. For these Norse traders from Limerick had found Ari Marson, and Ketla of Ruykjanes, supposed to have been long since drowned at sea, and said that the people had made him and Ketla chiefs, and baptised Ari. What is all this? and what is this, too, which the Esquimaux children taken in Markland told the Northmen, of a land beyond them where the folk wore white clothes, and carried flags on poles? Are these all dreams? or was some part of that great civilisation, the relics

whereof your antiquarians find in so many parts of the United States, still in existence some 900 years ago; and were these old Norse cousins of ours upon the very edge of it? Be that as it may, how nearly did these fierce Vikings, some of whom seemed to have sailed far south along the shore, become aware that just beyond them lay a land of fruits and spices, gold, and gems? The adverse current of the Gulf Stream, it may be, would have long prevented their getting past the Bahamas into the Gulf of Mexico; but, sooner or later, some storm must have carried a Greenland viking to San Domingo, or to Cuba; and then, as has been well said, some Scandinavian dynasty might have sat upon the throne of Mexico.

These stories are well known to antiquarians. They may be found, almost all of them, in Professor Rafn's *Antiquitates Americanæ*. The action in them stands out often so clear and dramatic, that the internal evidence of historic truth is irresistible. Thorvald, who, when he saw what seems to be, they say, the bluff head of Alderton at the south-east end of Boston Bay, said, 'Here should I like to dwell,' and, shot by an Esquimaux arrow, bade bury him on that place, with a cross at his head and a cross at his feet, and call the place Cross Ness for evermore; Gudrida, the magnificent widow, who wins hearts and sees strange deeds from Iceland to Greenland, and Greenland to Vinland and back, and at last, worn out and sad, goes

off on a pilgrimage to Rome; Helgi and Finnbogi, the Norwegians, who, like our Arctic voyagers in after times, devise all sorts of sports and games to keep the men in humour during the long winter at Hope; and last, but not least, the terrible Freydisa, who when the Norse are seized with a sudden panic at the Esquimaux, and flee from them, as they had three weeks before fled from Thorfinn's bellowing bull, turns, when so weak that she cannot escape, single-handed on the savages, and catching up a slain man's sword, puts them all to flight with her fierce visage and fierce cries—Freydisa the Terrible, who, in another voyage, persuades her husband to fall on Helgi and Finnbogi, when asleep, and murder them and all their men; and then, when he will not murder the five women too, takes up an axe and slays them all herself, and getting back to Greenland, when the dark and unexplained tale comes out, lives unpunished, but abhorred henceforth. All these folks, I say, are no phantoms, but realities; at least, if I can judge of internal evidence.

But, beyond them, and hovering on the verge of Mythus and fairy land, there is a ballad called 'Finn the Fair,' and how

> An upland Earl had twa braw sons,
> My story to begin;
> The tane was hight Haldane the strong,
> The tither was winsome Finn.

and so forth; which was still sung, with other 'rimur,' or ballads, in the Faroes, at the end of the last century. Professor Rafn has inserted it, because it talks of Vinland as a well-known place, and because the brothers are sent by the princess to slay American kings; but that Rime has another value. It is of a beauty so perfect, and yet so like the old Scotch ballads in its heroic conception of love, and in all its forms and its qualities, that it is one proof more, to any student of early European poetry, that we and these old Norsemen are men of the same blood. Your own Professor Longfellow may know it far better than I, who am no Norse scholar. But, if he does, might I beg him to translate it some day, as none but he can translate? It is so sad, that no tenderness less exquisite than his can prevent its being painful; and, at least in its denouement, so naive, that no purity less exquisite than his can prevent its being dreadful. But the Rime is as worthy of Mr. Longfellow as he is worthy of the Rime.

If anything more important than is told by Professor Rafn and Mr. Black[1] be now known to the antiquarians of Massachussets, let me entreat them to pardon my ignorance. But let me record my opinion that, though somewhat too much may have been made in past years of certain rock-inscriptions, and

[1] Black, translator of Mallett's *Northern Antiquities*, Supplementary Chapter I., and Rafn's *Antiquitates Americanæ*.

so forth, on this side of the Atlantic, there can be no reasonable doubt that our own race landed and tried to settle on the shore of New England six hundred years before their kinsmen, and, in many cases, their actual descendants, the august Pilgrim Fathers of the 17th century. And so, as I said, a Scandinavian dynasty might have been seated now upon the throne of Mexico. And how was that strange chance lost? First, of course, by the length and danger of the coasting voyage. It was one thing to have, like Columbus and Vespucci, Cortes and Pizarro, the Azores as a half-way port; another to have Greenland, or even Iceland. It was one thing to run South West upon Columbus' track, across the Mar de Dámas, the Ladies Sea, which hardly knows a storm, with the blazing blue above, the blazing blue below, in an ever-warming climate, where every breath is life and joy; another to struggle against the fogs and icebergs, the rocks and currents, of the dreary North Atlantic. No wonder, then, that the knowledge of Markland, and Vinland, and Whiteman's Land died away in a few generations, and became but fire-side sagas for the winter nights.

But there were other causes, more honourable to the dogged energy of the Norse. They were in those very years conquering and settling nearer home as no other people—unless, perhaps, the old Ionian Greeks, conquered and settled.

Greenland, we have seen, they held—the western side at least—and held it long and well enough to afford, it is said, 2,600 pounds of walrus' teeth as yearly tithe to the Pope, besides Peter's pence, and to build many a convent, and church, and cathedral, with farms and homesteads round; for one saga speaks of Greenland as producing wheat of the finest quality. All is ruined now, perhaps by gradual change of climate.

But they had richer fields of enterprise than Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroes. Their boldest outlaws at that very time—whether from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, or Britain—were forming the imperial life-guard of the Byzantine Emperor, as the once famous Varangers of Constantinople; and that splendid epoch of their race was just dawning, of which my lamented friend, the late Sir Edmund Head, says so well in his preface to Viga Glum's Icelandic *Saga*, 'The Sagas, of which this tale is one, were composed for the men who have left their mark in every corner of Europe; and whose language and laws are at this moment important elements in the speech and institutions of England, America, and Australia. There is no page of modern history in which the influence of the Norsemen and their conquests must not be taken into account—Russia, Constantinople, Greece, Palestine, Sicily, the coasts of Africa, Southern Italy, France, the Spanish Penin-

sula, England, Scotland, Ireland, and every rock and island round them, have been visited, and most of them at one time or the other ruled, by the men of Scandinavia. The motto on the sword of Roger Guiscard was a proud one:

Appulus et Calaber, Siculus mihi servit et Afer.'

Every island, says Sir Edmund Head, and truly—for the name of almost every island on the coast of England, Scotland, and Eastern Ireland, ends in either *ey* or *ay* or *oe*, a Norse appellative, as is the word island itself—is a mark of its having been, at some time or other, visited by the Vikings of Scandinavia.

Norway, meanwhile, was convulsed by war; and what perhaps was of more immediate consequence, Svend Fork-beard, whom we Englishmen call Sweyn —the renegade from that Christian Faith which had been forced on him by his German conqueror, the Emperor Otto II.—with his illustrious son Cnut, whom we call Canute, were just calling together all the most daring spirits of the Baltic coasts for the subjugation of England; and when that great feat was performed, the Scandinavian emigration was paralysed, probably, for a time by the fearful wars at home. While the King of Sweden, and St. Olaf Tryggvason, king of Norway, were setting on Denmark during Cnut's pilgrimage to Rome, and Cnut,

sailing with a mighty fleet to Norway, was driving St. Olaf into Russia, to return and fall in the fratricidal battle of Stiklestead—during, strangely enough, a total eclipse of the sun—Vinland was like enough to remain still uncolonised. After Cnut's short-lived triumph—king as he was of Denmark, Norway, England, and half Scotland, and what not of Wendish Folk inside the Baltic—the force of the Norsemen seems to have been exhausted in their native lands. Once more only, if I remember right, did 'Lochlin,' really and hopefully send forth her 'mailed swarm' to conquer a foreign land; and with a result unexpected alike by them and by their enemies. Had it been otherwise, we might not have been here this day.

Let me sketch for you once more—though you have heard it, doubtless, many a time—the tale of that tremendous fortnight which settled the fate of Britain, and therefore of North America; which decided—just in those great times when the decision was to be made—whether we should be on a par with the other civilised nations of Europe, like them the 'heirs of all the ages,' with our share not only of Roman Christianity and Roman centralisation—a member of the great comity of European nations, held together in one Christian bond by the Pope—but heirs also of Roman civilisation, Roman literature, Roman law; and therefore, in due time, of Greek philosophy and art. No less a question than this, it seems to me,

hung in the balance during that fortnight of autumn, 1066.

Poor old Edward the Confessor, holy, weak, and sad, lay in his new choir of Westminster—where the wicked ceased from troubling, and the weary were at rest. The crowned ascetic had left no heir behind. England seemed as a corpse, to which all the eagles might gather together; and the South-English, in their utter need, had chosen for their king the ablest, and it may be the justest, man in Britain—Earl Harold Godwinsson: himself, like half the upper classes of England then, of the all-dominant Norse blood; for his mother was a Danish princess. Then out of Norway, with a mighty host, came Harold Hardraade, taller than all men, the ideal Viking of his time. Half-brother of the now dead St. Olaf, severely wounded when he was but fifteen, at Stiklestead, when Olaf fell, he had warred and plundered on many a coast. He had been away to Russia to King Jaroslaf; he had been in the Emperor's Varanger guard at Constantinople—and, it was whispered, had slain a lion there with his bare hands; he had carved his name and his comrades' in Runic characters—if you go to Venice you may see them at this day—on the loins of the great marble lion, which stood in his time not in Venice but in Athens. And now, king of Norway and conqueror, for the time, of Denmark, why should he not take England, as

Sweyn and Canute took it sixty years before, when the flower of the English gentry perished at the fatal battle of Assingdune? If he and his half-barbarous host had conquered, the civilisation of Britain would have been thrown back, perhaps, for centuries. But it was not to be.

England *was* to be conquered by the Norman; but by the civilised, not the barbaric; by the Norse who had settled, but four generations before, in the North East of France under Rou, Rollo, Rolf the Ganger—so-called, they say, because his legs were so long that, when on horseback, he touched the ground and seemed to gang, or walk. He and his Norsemen had taken their share of France, and called it Normandy to this day; and meanwhile, with that docility and adaptability which marks so often truly great spirits, they had changed their creed, their language, their habits, and had become, from heathen and murderous Berserkers, the most truly civilised people of Europe, and—as was most natural then—the most faithful allies and servants of the Pope of Rome. So greatly had they changed, and so fast, that William Duke of Normandy, the great-great-grandson of Rolf the wild Viking, was perhaps the finest gentleman, as well as the most cultivated sovereign, and the greatest statesman and warrior, in all Europe.

So Harold of Norway came with all his Vikings to Stamford Bridge by York; and took, by coming,

only that which Harold of England promised him, namely, 'forasmuch as he was taller than any other man, seven feet of English ground."

The story of that great battle, told with a few inaccuracies, but told as only great poets tell, you should read, if you have not read it already, in the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson, the Homer of the North—

> High feast that day held the birds of the air and
> the beasts of the field,
> White-tailed erne and sallow glede,
> Dusky raven, with horny neb,
> And the grey deer, the wolf of the wood.

The bones of the slain, men say, whitened the place for fifty years to come.

And remember, that on the same day on which that fight befell—Sept. 27, 1066—William, Duke of Normandy, with all his French-speaking Norsemen, was sailing across the British Channel, under the protection of a banner consecrated by the Pope, to conquer that England which the Norse-speaking Normans could not conquer.

And now King Harold showed himself a man. He turned at once from the North of England to the South. He raised the folk of the Southern, as he had raised those of the Central and Northern shires; and in sixteen days—after a march which in those

times was a prodigious feat—he was entrenched upon the fatal down which men called Heathfield then, and Senlac, but Battle to this day—with William and his French Normans opposite him on Telham hill.

Then came the battle of Hastings. You all know what befell upon that day; and how the old weapon was matched against the new—the English axe against the Norman lance—and beaten only because the English broke their ranks. If you wish to refresh your memories, read the tale once more in Mr. Freeman's *History of England*, or Prof. Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, or even, best of all, the late Lord Lytton's splendid romance of *Harold*. And when you go to England, go, as some of you may have gone already, to Battle; and there from off the Abbey grounds, or from Mountjoy behind, look down off what was then 'The Heathy Field,' over the long slopes of green pasture and the rich hop-gardens, where were no hop-gardens then, and the flat tide-marshes winding between the wooded heights, towards the southern sea; and imagine for yourselves the feelings of an Englishman as he contemplates that broad green sloping lawn, on which was decided the destiny of his native land. Here, right beneath, rode Taillefer up the slope before them all, singing the song of Roland, tossing his lance in air and catching it as it fell, with all the

Norse berserker spirit of his ancestors flashing out in him, at the thought of one fair fight, and then purgatory, or Valhalla—Taillefer perhaps preferred the latter. Yonder on the left, in that copse where the red-ochre gully runs, is Sanguelac, the drain of blood, into which (as the Bayeux tapestry, woven by Matilda's maids, still shows) the Norman knights fell, horse and man, till the gully was bridged with writhing bodies for those who rode after. Here, where you stand—the crest of the hill marks where it must have been—was the stockade on which depended the fate of England. Yonder, perhaps, stalked out one English squire or house-carle after another: tall men with long-handled battle-axes—one specially terrible, with a wooden helmet which no sword could pierce—who hewed and hewed down knight on knight, till they themselves were borne to earth at last. And here, among the trees and ruins of the garden, kept trim by those who know the treasure which they own, stood Harold's two standards of the fighting man and the dragon of Wessex. And here, close by (for here, for many a century, stood the high altar of Battle Abbey, where monks sang masses for Harold's soul), upon this very spot the Swan-neck found her hero lover's corpse. 'Ah,' says many an Englishman —and who will blame him for it—'how grand to have died beneath that standard on that day!' Yes, and how right. And yet how right, likewise, that the

Norman's cry of Dexaie, 'God Help,' and not the English hurrah, should have won that day, till William rode up Mountjoye in the afternoon to see the English army, terrible even in defeat, struggling through copse and marsh away toward Brede, and, like retreating lions driven into their native woods, slaying more in the pursuit than they slew even in the fight.

But so it was to be; for so it ought to have been. You, my American friends, delight, as I have said already, in seeing the old places of the old country. Go, I beg you, and look at that old place, and if you be wise, you will carry back from it one lesson: that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; nor His ways as our ways.

It was a fearful time which followed. I cannot but believe that our forefathers had been, in some way or other, great sinners, or two such conquests as Canute's and William's would not have fallen on them within the short space of sixty years. They did not want for courage, as Stanford Brigg and Hastings showed full well. English swine, their Norman conquerors called them often enough; but never English cowards. Their ruinous vice, if we are to trust the records of the time, was what the old monks called accidia—ἀκηδία—and ranked it as one of the seven deadly sins: a general careless, sleepy, comfortable habit of mind, which lets all go

its way for good or evil—a habit of mind too often accompanied, as in the case of the Anglo-Danes, with self-indulgence, often coarse enough. Huge eaters and huger drinkers, fuddled with ale, were the men who went down at Hastings—though they went down like heroes—before the staid and sober Norman out of France.

But those were fearful times. As long as William lived, ruthless as he was to all rebels, he kept order and did justice with a strong and steady hand; for he brought with him from Normandy the instincts of a truly great statesman. And in his sons' time matters grew worse and worse. After that, in the troubles of Stephen's reign, anarchy let loose tyranny in its most fearful form, and things were done which recall the cruelties of the old Spanish conquistadores in America. Scott's charming romance of *Ivanhoe* must be taken, I fear, as a too true picture of English society in the time of Richard I.

And what came of it all? What was the result of all this misery and wrong?

This, paradoxical as it may seem—that the Norman conquest was the making of the English people; of the Free Commons of England.

Paradoxical, but true. First, you must dismiss from your minds the too common notion that there is now, in England, a governing Norman aristocracy, or that there has been one, at least since the year

1215, when Magna Charta was won from the Norman John by Normans and by English alike. For the first victors at Hastings, like the first conquistadores in America, perished, as the monk chronicles point out, rapidly by their own crimes; and very few of our nobility can trace their names back to the authentic Battle Abbey roll. The great majority of the peers have sprung from, and all have intermarried with, the Commons; and the peerage has been from the first, and has become more and more as centuries have rolled on, the prize of success in life.

The cause is plain. The conquest of England by the Normans was not one of those conquests of a savage by a civilised race, or of a cowardly race by a brave race, which results in the slavery of the conquered, and leaves the gulf of caste between two races, master and slave. That was the case in France, and resulted, after centuries of oppression, in the great and dreadful revolution of 1793, which convulsed not only France but the whole civilised world. But caste, thank God, has never existed in England, since at least the first generation after the Norman conquest.

The vast majority, all but the whole population of England, have been always free; and free, as they are not where caste exists, to change their occupations. They could intermarry, if they were able men, into the ranks above them; as they did sink, if they

were unable men, into the ranks below them. Any man acquainted with the origin of our English surnames may verify this fact for himself, by looking at the names of a single parish or a single street of shops. There, jumbled together, he will find names marking the noblest Saxon or Angle blood—Kenward or Kenric, Osgood or Osborne, side by side with Cordery or Banister—now names of farmers in my own parish—or other Norman-French names which may be, like those two last, in Battle Abbey roll — and side by side the almost ubiquitous Brown, whose ancestor was probably some Danish or Norwegian housecarle, proud of his name Biorn the bear, and the ubiquitous Smith or Smythe, the smiter, whose forefather, whether he now be peasant or peer, assuredly handled the tongs and hammer at his own forge. This holds true equally in New England and in Old. When I search through (as I delight to do) your New England surnames, I find the same jumble of names—West Saxon, Angle, Danish, Norman, and French-Norman likewise, many of primæval and heathen antiquity, many of high nobility, all worked together, as at home, to form the Free Commoners of England.

If any should wish to know more on this curious and important subject, let me recommend them to study Ferguson's *Teutonic Name System*, a book from which you will discover that some of our quaintest,

and seemingly most plebeian surnames—many surnames, too, which are extinct in England, but remain in America—are really corruptions of good old Teutonic names, which our ancestors may have carried in the German Forest, before an Englishman set foot on British soil; from which he will rise with the comfortable feeling that we English-speaking men, from the highest to the lowest, are literally kinsmen. Nay, so utterly made up now is the old blood-feud between Norseman and Englishman, between the descendants of those who conquered and those who were conquered, that in the children of our Prince of Wales, after 800 years, the blood of William of Normandy is mingled with the blood of the very Harold who fell at Hastings. And so, by the bitter woes which followed the Norman conquest was the whole population, Dane, Angle, and Saxon, earl and churl, freeman and slave, crushed and welded together into one homogeneous mass, made just and merciful towards each other by the most wholesome of all teachings, a community of suffering; and if they had been, as I fear they were, a lazy and a sensual people, were taught

> That life is not as idle ore,
> But heated hot with burning fears,
> And bathed in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the strokes of doom
> To shape and use.

But how did these wild Vikings become Christian men? It is a long story. So staunch a race was sure to be converted only very slowly. Noble missionaries as Ansgar, Rembert, and Poppo, had worked for 150 years and more among the heathens of Denmark. But the patriotism of the Norseman always recoiled, even though in secret, from the fact that they were German monks, backed by the authority of the German emperor; and many a man, like Svend Fork-beard, father of the great Canute, though he had the Kaiser himself for godfather, turned heathen once more, the moment he was free, because his baptism was the badge of foreign conquest, and neither pope nor Kaiser should lord it over him, body or soul. St. Olaf, indeed, forced Christianity on the Norse at the sword's point, often by horrid cruelties, and perished in the attempt. But who forced it on the Norsemen of Scotland, England, Ireland, Neustria, Russia, and all the Eastern Baltic? It was absorbed and in most cases, I believe, gradually and willingly, as a gospel and good news to hearts worn out with the storm of their own passions. And whence came their Christianity? Much of it, as in the case of the Danes, and still more of the French Normans, came direct from Rome, the city which, let them defy its influence as they would, was still the fount of all theology, as well as of all civilisation. But I must believe that much of it came

from that mysterious ancient Western Church, the Church of St. Patric, St. Bridget, St. Columba, which had covered with rude cells and chapels the rocky islets of the North Atlantic, even to Iceland itself. Even to Iceland; for when that island was first discovered, about A.D. 840, the Norsemen found in an isle, on the east and west and elsewhere, Irish books and bells and wooden crosses, and named that island Papey, the isle of the popes—some little colony of monks, who lived by fishing, and who are said to have left the land when the Norsemen settled in it. Let us believe, for it is consonant with reason and experience, that the sight of those poor monks, plundered and massacred again and again by the 'mailed swarms of Lochlin,' yet never exterminated, but springing up again in the same place, ready for fresh massacre, a sacred plant which God had planted, and which no rage of man could trample out—let us believe, I say, that that sight taught at last to the buccaneers of the old world that there was a purer manliness, a loftier heroism, than the ferocious self-assertion of the Berserker, even the heroism of humility, gentleness, self-restraint, self-sacrifice. That there was a strength which was made perfect in weakness; a glory, not of the sword but of the cross. We will believe that that was the lesson which the Norsemen learnt, after many a wild and blood-stained voyage, from the monks of Iona or of

Derry, which caused the building of such churches as that which Sightrys, king of Dublin, raised about the year 1030, not in the Norse but in the Irish quarter of Dublin: a sacred token of amity between the new settlers and the natives on the ground of a common faith. Let us believe, too, that the influence of woman was not wanting in the good work—that the story of St. Margaret and Malcolm Canmore was repeated, though inversely, in the case of many a heathen Scandinavian jarl, who, marrying the princely daughter of some Scottish chieftain, found in her creed at last something more precious than herself; while his brother or his cousin became, at Dublin or Wexford or Waterford, the husband of some saffron-robed Irish princess, 'fair as an elf,' as the old saying was; 'some maiden of the three transcendent hues,' of whom the old book of Linane says—

> Red as the blood which flowed from stricken deer,
> White as the snow on which that blood ran down,
> Black as the raven who drank up that blood.

—and possibly, as in the case of Brian Boru's mother, had given his fair-haired sister in marriage to some Irish prince, and could not resist the spell of their new creed, and the spell too, it may be, of some sister of theirs who had long given up all thought of earthly marriage to tend the undying fire of St. Bridget among the consecrated virgins of Kildare.

I am not drawing from mere imagination. That such things must have happened, and happened again and again, is certain to anyone who knows, even superficially, the documents of that time. And I doubt not that, in manners as well as in religion, the Norse were humanised and civilised by their contact with the Celts, both in Scotland and in Ireland. Both peoples had valour, intellect, imagination: but the Celt had that which the burly angular Norse character, however deep and stately, and however humorous, wanted; namely, music of nature, tender ness, grace, rapidity, playfulness; just the qualities, combining with the Scandinavian (and in Scotland with the Angle) elements of character which have produced, in Ireland and in Scotland, two schools of lyric poetry second to none in the world.

And so they were converted to what was then a dark and awful creed; a creed of ascetic self-torture and purgatorial fires for those who escaped the still more dreadful, because endless, doom of the rest of the human race. But, because it was a sad creed, it suited better men, who had, when conscience re-awakened in them, but too good reason to be sad; and the minsters and cloisters which sprang up over the whole of Northern Europe, and even beyond it, along the dreary western shores of Greenland itself, are the symbols of a splendid repentance for their own sins and for the sins of their forefathers.

Gudruna herself, of whom I spoke just now, one of those old Norse heroines who helped to discover America, though a historic personage, is a symbolic one likewise, and the pattern of a whole class. She, too, after many journeys to Iceland, Greenland, and Winland, goes on a pilgrimage to Rome, to get, I presume, absolution from the Pope himself for all the sins of her strange, rich, stormy, wayward life.

Have you not read—many of you surely have —La Motte Fouqué's *Romance of Sintram?* It embodies all that I would say. It is the spiritual drama of that early middle age; very sad, morbid if you will, but true to fact. The Lady Verena ought not, perhaps, to desert her husband, and shut herself up in a cloister. But so she would have done in those old days. And who shall judge her harshly for so doing? When the brutality of the man seems past all cure, who shall blame the woman if she glides away into some atmosphere of peace and purity, to pray for him whom neither warnings nor caresses will amend? It is a sad book, *Sintram.* And yet not too sad. For they were a sad people, those old Norse forefathers of ours. Their Christianity was sad; their minsters sad; there are few sadder, though few grander, buildings than a Norman church.

And yet, perhaps, their Christianity did not make them sad. It was but the other and the healthier

side of that sadness which they had as heathens. Read which you will of the old sagas—heathen or half-Christian—the Eyrbiggia, Viga Glum, Burnt Niall, Grettir the Strong, and, above all, Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* itself—and you will see at once how sad they are. There is, in the old sagas, none of that enjoyment of life which shines out everywhere in Greek poetry, even through its deepest tragedies. Not in complacency with Nature's beauty, but in the fierce struggle with her wrath, does the Norseman feel pleasure. Nature to him was not, as in Mr. Longfellow's exquisite poem,[1] the kind old nurse, to take him on her knee and whisper to him, ever anew, the story without an end. She was a weird witch-wife, mother of storm demons and frost giants, who must be fought with steadily, warily, wearily, over dreary heaths and snow-capped fells, and rugged nesses and tossing sounds, and away into the boundless sea—or who could live?—till he got hardened in the fight into ruthlessness of need and greed. The poor strip of flat strath, ploughed and re-ploughed again in the short summer days, would yield no more; or wet harvests spoiled the crops, or heavy snows starved the cattle. And so the Norseman launched his ships when the lands were sown in spring, and went forth to pillage or to trade, as luck would have, to summerted, as he himself called it;

[1] On the Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz.

and came back, if he ever came, in autumn to the women to help at harvest-time, with blood upon his hand. But had he staid at home, blood would have been there still. Three out of four of them had been mixed up in some man-slaying, or had some blood-feud to avenge among their own kin.

The whole of Scandinavia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Orkney, and the rest, remind me ever of that terrible picture of the great Norse painter, Tiddeman, in which two splendid youths, lashed together, in true Norse duel fashion by the waist, are hewing each other to death with the short axe, about some hot words over their ale. The loss of life, and that of the most gallant of the young, in those days must have been enormous. If the vitality of the race had not been even more enormous, they must have destroyed each other, as the Red Indians have done, off the face of the earth. They lived these Norsemen, not to live—they lived to die. For what cared they? Death—what was death to them! what it was to the Jomsburger Viking, who, when led out to execution, said to the headsman, 'Die! with all pleasure. We used to question in Jomsburg whether a man felt when his head was off? Now I shall know; but if I do, take care, for I shall smite thee with my knife. And meanwhile, spoil not this long hair of mine; it is so beautiful.'

But, oh! what waste. What might not these men

have done if they had sought peace, not war; if they had learned a few centuries sooner to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God?

And yet one loves them, blood-stained as they are. Your own poets, men brought up under circumstances, under ideas the most opposite to theirs, love them, and cannot help it. And why? It is not merely for their bold daring, it is not merely for their stern endurance; nor again that they had in them that shift and thrift, those steady and common-sense business habits, which made their noblest men not ashamed to go on voyages of merchandise. Nor is it, again, that grim humour—humour as of the modern Scotch—which so often flashes out into an actual jest, but more usually underlies unspoken all their deeds. Is it not rather that these men are our forefathers? that their blood runs in the veins of perhaps three men out of four in any general assembly, whether in America or in Britain? Startling as the assertion may be, I believe it to be strictly true.

Be that as it may, I cannot read the stories of your western men, the writings of Bret Harte, or Colonel John Hay, for instance, without feeling at every turn that there are the old Norse alive again, beyond the very ocean which they first crossed, 850 years ago.

Let me try to prove my point, and end with a story, as I began with one.

It is just 30 years before the Norman conquest of England, the evening of the battle of Sticklestead. St. Olaf's corpse is still lying unburied on the hill-side. The reforming and Christian king has fallen in the attempt to force Christianity and despotism on the Conservative and half-heathen party—the free bonders or yeoman-farmers of Norway. Thormod, his poet, —the man, as his name means, of thunder mood— who has been standing in the ranks, at last has an arrow in his left side. He breaks off the shaft, and thus sore wounded goes up, when all is lost, to a farm where is a great barn full of wounded. One Kimbe comes, a man out of the opposite or bonder part. 'There is great howling and screaming in there,' he says. 'King Olaf's men fought bravely enough: but it is a shame brisk young lads cannot bear their wounds. On what side wert thou in the fight?' 'On the best side,' says the beaten Thormod. Kimbe sees that Thormod has a gold bracelet on his arm. 'Thou art surely a king's man. Give me thy gold ring and I will hide thee, ere the bonders kill thee.'

Thormod said, 'Take it, if thou canst get it. I have lost that which is worth more;' and he stretched out his left hand, and Kimbe tried to take it. But Thormod, swinging his sword, cut off his hand; and it is said Kimbe behaved no better over his wound than those he had been blaming.

Then Thormod went into the barn; and after he

had sung his song there in praise of his dead king, he went into an inner room, where was a fire, and water warming, and a handsome girl binding up men's wounds. And he sat down by the door; and one said to him 'Why art thou so dead pale? Why dost thou not call for the leech?' Then sung Thormod—

> I am not blooming; and the fair
> And slender maiden loves to care
> For blooming youths. Few care for me,
> With Fenri's gold meal I can't fee;

and so forth, improvising after the old Norse fashion.

Then Thormod got up and went to the fire, and stood and warmed himself. And the nurse-girl said to him, 'Go out man, and bring some of the split-firewood which lies outside the door.' He went out and brought an armful of wood and threw it down. Then the nurse-girl looked him in the face and said, 'Dreadful pale is this man. Why art thou so?' Then sang Thormod—

> Thou wonderest, sweet bloom, at me,
> A man so hideous to see.
> The arrow-drift o'ertook me, girl,
> A fine-ground arrow in the whirl
> Went through me, and I feel the dart
> Sits, lovely lass, too near my heart.

The girl said, 'Let me see thy wound.' Then

Thormod sat down, and the girl saw his wounds, and that which was in his side, and saw that there was a piece of iron in it; but could not tell where it had gone. In a stone pot she had leeks and other herbs, and boiled them, and gave the wounded men of it to eat. But Thormod said, 'Take it away; I have no appetite now for my broth.' Then she took a great pair of tongs and tried to pull out the iron; but the wound was swelled, and there was too little to lay hold of. Now said Thormod, 'Cut in so deep that thou canst get at the iron, and give me the tongs.' She did as he said. Then took Thormod the gold bracelet off his hand and gave it the nurse-girl, and bade her do with it what she liked.

'It is a good man's gift,' said he. 'King Olaf gave me the ring this morning.'

Then Thormod took the tongs and pulled the iron out. But on the iron was a barb, on which hung flesh from the heart, some red, some white. When he saw that, he said, 'The king has fed us well. I am fat, even to the heart's roots.' And so leant back and was dead.

I shall not insult your intelligence by any comment or even epithet of my own. I shall but ask you was not this man your kinsman? Does not the story sound, allowing for all change of manners as well as of time and place, like a scene out of your own Bret Harte or Colonel John Hay's writings; a scene of

the dry humour the rough heroism of your own far West? Yes, as long as you have your *Jem Bludsos* and *Tom Flynns of Virginia City*, the old Norse blood is surely not extinct, the old Norse spirit is not dead.

## LECTURE IV.

### THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

I WISH to speak to you to-night about one of those old despotic empires which were in every case the earliest known form of civilisation. Were I minded to play the cynic or the mountebank, I should choose some corrupt and effete despotism, already grown weak and ridiculous by its decay—as did at last the Roman and then the Byzantine Empire—and, after raising a laugh at the expense of the old system say, See what a superior people you are now,—how impossible, under free and enlightened institutions, is anything so base and so absurd as went on, even in despotic France before the Revolution of 1793. Well that would be on the whole true, thank God; but what need is there to say it?

Let us keep our scorn for our own weaknesses, our blame for our own sins, certain that we shall gain more instruction, though not more amusement, by hunting out the good which is in anything than by hunting out its evil. For me, true to that which I

proposed in my last lecture, I have chosen, not the worst, but the best despotism which I could find in history, founded and ruled by a truly heroic personage, one whose name has become a proverb and a legend, that so I might lift up your minds, even by the contemplation of an old Eastern empire, to see that it, too, could be a work and ordinance of God, and its hero the servant of the Lord. For we are almost bound to call Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, by this august title for two reasons—First, because the Hebrew Scriptures call him so; and next, because he proved himself to be such by his actions and their consequences—at least in the eyes of those who believe, as I do, in a far-seeing and far-reaching Providence, by which all human history is—

Bound by gold chains unto the throne of God.

His work was very different from any that need be done, or can be done, in these our days. But while we thank God that such work is now as unnecessary as impossible; we may thank God likewise that, when such work was necessary and possible, a man was raised up to do it; and to do it, as all accounts assert, better, perhaps, than it had ever been done before or since.

True, the old conquerors, who absorbed nation after nation, tribe after tribe, and founded empires on their ruins, are now, I trust, about to be replaced,

throughout the world, as here and in Britain at home, by free self-governed peoples—

> The old order changeth, giving place to the new;
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

And that custom of conquest and empire and transplantation did more than once corrupt the world. And yet in it, too, God may have more than once fulfilled his own designs, as He did, if Scripture is to be believed, in Cyrus, well surnamed the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire some 2,400 years ago. For these empires, it must be remembered, did at least that which the Roman Empire did among a scattered number of savage tribes, or separate little races, hating and murdering each other, speaking different tongues, and worshipping different gods, and losing utterly the sense of a common humanity, till they looked on the people who dwelt in the next valley as fiends, to be sacrificed, if caught, to their own fiends at home. Among such as these, empires did introduce order, law, common speech, common interest, the notion of nationality and humanity. They, as it were, hammered together the fragments of the human race till they had moulded them into one. They did it cruelly, clumsily, ill: but was there ever work done on earth, however noble, which was not—alas, alas!—done somewhat ill?

Let me talk to you a little about the old hero. He and his hardy Persians should be specially interesting to us. For in them first does our race, the Aryan race, appear in authentic history. In them first did our race give promise of being the conquering and civilising race of the future world. And to the conquests of Cyrus—so strangely are all great times and great movements of the human family linked to each other—to his conquests, humanly speaking, is owing the fact that you are here, and I am speaking to you at this moment.

It is an oft-told story: but so grand a one that I must sketch it for you, however clumsily, once more.

In that mountain province called Farsistan, north-east of what we now call Persia, the dwelling place of the Persians, there dwelt, in the sixth and seventh centuries before Christ, a hardy tribe, of the purest blood of Iran, a branch of the same race as the Celtic, Teutonic, Greek, and Hindoo, and speaking a tongue akin to theirs. They had wandered thither, said their legends, out of the far north-east, from off some lofty plateau of Central Asia, driven out by the increasing cold, which left them but two months of summer to ten of winter.

They despised at first would that they had despised always!—the luxurious life of the dwellers in the plains, and the effeminate customs of the Medes—a branch of their own race who had con-

quered and intermarried with the Turanian, or Finnish tribes; and adopted much of their creed, as well as of their morals, throughout their vast but short-lived Median Empire. 'Soft countries,' said Cyrus himself—so runs the tale—'gave birth to small men. No region produced at once delightful fruits and men of a warlike spirit.' Letters were to them, probably then unknown. They borrowed them in after years, as they borrowed their art, from Babylonians, Assyrians, and other Semitic nations whom they conquered. From the age of five to that of twenty, their lads were instructed but in two things—to speak the truth and to shoot with the bow. To ride was the third necessary art, introduced, according to Xenophon, after they had descended from their mountain fastnesses to conquer the whole East.

Their creed was simple enough. Ahura Mazda—Ormuzd, as he has been called since—was the one eternal Creator, the source of all light and life and good. He spake his word, and it accomplished the creation of heaven, before the water, before the earth, before the cow, before the tree, before the fire, before man the truthful, before the Devas and beasts of prey, before the whole existing universe; before every good thing created by Ahura Mazda and springing from Truth.

He needed no sacrifices of blood. He was to be worshipped only with prayers, with offerings of the

inspiring juice of the now unknown herb Homa, and by the preservation of the sacred fire, which, understand, was not he, but the symbol—as was light and the sun—of the good spirit—of Ahura Mazda. They had no images of the gods, these old Persians; no temples, no altars, so says Herodotus, and considered the use of them a sign of folly. They were, as has been well said of them, the Puritans of the old world. When they descended from their mountain fastnesses, they became the iconoclasts of the old world; and the later Isaiah, out of the depths of national shame, captivity and exile, saw in them brother-spirits, the chosen of the Lord, whose hero Cyrus, the Lord was holding by his right hand, till all the foul superstitions and foul effeminacies of the rotten Semitic peoples of the East, and even of Egypt itself, should be crushed, though alas! only for a while, by men who felt that they had a commission from the God of light and truth and purity, to sweep out all that with the besom of destruction.

But that was a later inspiration. In earlier, and it may be happier, times, the duty of the good man was to strive against all evil, disorder, uselessness, incompetence in their more simple forms. 'He therefore is a holy man,' says Ormuzd in the Zend-avesta, 'who has built a dwelling on the earth, in which he maintains fire, cattle, his wife, his children, and flocks and herds; he who makes the earth produce barley, he

who cultivates the fruits of the soil, cultivates purity; he advances the law of Ahura Mazda as much as if he had offered a hundred sacrifices.'

To reclaim the waste, to till the land, to make a corner of the earth better than they found it, was to these men to rescue a bit of Ormuzd's world out of the usurped dominion of Ahriman; to rescue it from the spirit of evil and disorder for its rightful owner, the Spirit of Order and of Good.

For they believed in an evil spirit, these old Persians. Evil was not for them a lower form of good. With their intense sense of the difference between right and wrong it could be nothing less than hateful; to be attacked, exterminated, as a personal enemy, till it became to them at last impersonate and a person.

Zarathustra, the mystery of evil, weighed heavily on them and on their great prophet, Zoroaster—splendour of gold, as I am told his name signifies—who lived, no man knows clearly when or clearly where, but who lived and lives for ever, for his works follow him. He, too, tried to solve for his people the mystery of evil; and if he did not succeed, who has succeeded yet? Warring against Ormuzd, Ahura Mazda, was Ahriman, Angra Mainyus, literally the being of an evil mind, the ill-conditioned being. He was labouring perpetually to spoil the good work of Ormuzd alike in nature and in man. He was the

cause of the fall of man, the tempter, the author of misery and death; he was eternal and uncreate as Ormuzd was. But that, perhaps, was a corruption of the purer and older Zoroastrian creed. With it, if Ahriman were eternal in the past, he would not be eternal in the future. Somehow, somewhen, somewhere, in the day when three prophets—the increasing light, the increasing truth, and the existing truth —should arise and give to mankind the last three books of the Zend-avesta, and convert all mankind to the pure creed, then evil should be conquered, the creation become pure again, and Ahriman vanish for ever; and, meanwhile, every good man was to fight valiantly for Ormuzd, his true lord, against Ahriman and all his works.

Men who held such a creed, and could speak truth and draw the bow, what might they not do when the hour and the man arrived? They were not a *big* nation. No; but they were a great nation, even while they were eating barley-bread and paying tribute to their conquerors the Medes, in the sterile valleys of Farsistan.

And at last the hour and the man came. The story is half legendary—differently told by different authors. Herodotus has one tale, Xenophon another. The first, at least, had ample means of information. Astyages is the old shah of the Median Empire, then at the height of its seeming might and splendour and

effeminacy. He has married his daughter, the princess Mandane, to Cambyses, seemingly a vassal-king or prince of the pure Persian blood. One night the old man is troubled with a dream. He sees a vine spring from his daughter, which overshadows all Asia. He sends for the Magi to interpret; and they tell him that Mandane will have a son who will reign in his stead. Having sons of his own, and fearing for the succession, he sends for Mandane, and, when her child is born, gives it to Harpagus, one of his courtiers, to be slain. The courtier relents, and hands it over to a herdsman, to be exposed on the mountains. The herdsman relents in turn, and brings the babe up as his own child.

When the boy, who goes by the name of Agradates, is grown, he is at play with the other herd-boys, and they choose him for a mimic king. Some he makes his guards, some he bids build houses, some carry his messages. The son of a Mede of rank refuses, and Agradates has him seized by his guards and chastised with the whip. The ancestral instincts of command and discipline are showing early in the lad.

The young gentleman complains to his father, the father to the old king, who of course sends for the herdsman and his boy. The boy answers in a tone so exactly like that in which Xenophon's Cyrus would have answered, that I must believe that both Xeno-

phon's Cyrus and Herodotus' Cyrus (like Xenophon's Socrates and Plato's Socrates) are real pictures of a real character; and that Herodotus' story, though Xenophon says nothing of it, is true.

He has done nothing, the noble boy says, but what was just. He had been chosen king in play, because the boys thought him most fit. The boy whom he had chastised was one of those who chose him. All the rest obeyed: but he would not, till at last he got his due reward. 'If I deserve punishment for that,' says the boy, 'I am ready to submit.'

The old king looks keenly and wonderingly at the young king, whose features seem somewhat like his own. Likely enough in those days, when an Iranian noble or prince would have a quite different cast of complexion and of face from a Turanian herdsman. A suspicion crosses him; and by threats of torture he gets the truth from the trembling herdsman.

To the poor wretch's rapture the old king lets him go unharmed. He has a more exquisite revenge to take, and sends for Harpagus, who likewise confesses the truth. The wily old tyrant has naught but gentle words. It is best as it is. He has been very sorry himself for the child, and Mandane's reproaches had gone to his heart. 'Let Harpagus go home and send his son to be a companion to the new-found prince. To-night there will be great sacrifices in honour of the

child's safety, and Harpagus is to be a guest at the banquet.'

Harpagus comes; and after eating his fill, is asked how he likes the king's meat? He gives the usual answer; and a covered basket is put before him, out of which he is to take—in Median fashion—what he likes. He finds in it the head and hands and feet of his own son. Like a true Eastern he shows no signs of horror. The king asks him if he knew what flesh he had been eating. He answers that he knew perfectly. That whatever the king did pleased him.

Like an Eastern courtier, he knew how to dissemble, but not to forgive, and bided his time. The Magi, to their credit, told Astyages that his dream had been fulfilled, that Cyrus—as we must now call the foundling prince—had fulfilled it by becoming a king in play, and the boy is let to go back to his father and his hardy Persian life. But Harpagus does not leave him alone, nor perhaps, do his own thoughts. He has wrongs to avenge on his grandfather. And it seems not altogether impossible to the young mountaineer.

He has seen enough of Median luxury to despise it and those who indulge in it. He has seen his own grandfather with his cheeks rouged, his eyelids stained with antimony, living a womanlike life, shut up from all his subjects in the recesses of a vast seraglio.

He calls together the mountain rulers; makes friends with Tigranes, an Armenian prince, a vassal

of the Mede, who has his wrongs likewise to avenge. And the two little armies of foot-soldiers—the Persians had no cavalry—defeat the innumerable horsemen of the Mede, take the old king, keep him in honourable captivity, and so change, one legend says, in a single battle, the fortunes of the whole East.

And then begins that series of conquests of which we know hardly anything, save the fact that they were made. The young mountaineer and his playmates, whom he makes his generals and satraps, sweep onward towards the West, teaching their men the art of riding, till the Persian cavalry becomes more famous than the Median had been. They gather to them, as a snow-ball gathers in rolling, the picked youth of every tribe whom they overcome. They knit these tribes to them in loyalty and affection by that righteousness—that truthfulness and justice—for which Isaiah in his grandest lyric strains has made them illustrious to all time; which Xenophon has celebrated in like manner in that exquisite book of his—the *Cyropædia.* The great Lydian kingdom of Crœsus—Asia Minor as we call it now—goes down before them. Babylon itself goes down, after that world-famed siege which ended in Belshazzar's feast; and when Cyrus died—still in the prime of life, the legends seem to say—he left a coherent and well-organised empire, which stretched from the Mediterranean to Hindostan.

So runs the tale, which to me, I confess, sounds

probable and rational enough. It may not do so to you; for it has not to many learned men. They are inclined to 'relegate it into the region of myth;' in plain English, to call old Herodotus a liar, or at least a dupe. What means those wise men can have at this distance of more than 2000 years, of knowing more about the matter than Herodotus, who lived within 100 years of Cyrus, I for myself, cannot discover. And I say this without the least wish to disparage these hypercritical persons. For there are—and more there ought to be, as long as lies and superstitions remain on this earth—a class of thinkers who hold in just suspicion all stories which savour of the sensational, the romantic, even the dramatic. They know the terrible uses to which appeals to the fancy and the emotions have been applied, and are still applied to enslave the intellects, the consciences, the very bodies of men and women. They dread so much from experience the abuse of that formula, that a thing is so beautiful it must be true, that they are inclined to reply, 'Rather let us say boldly, it is so beautiful that it cannot be true. Let us mistrust, or even refuse to believe *à priori*, and at first sight, all startling, sensational, even poetic tales, and accept nothing as history, which is not as dull as the ledger of a dry goods' store.' But I think that experience, both in nature and in society, are against that ditch-water philosophy. The weather, being governed by laws,

ought always to be equable and normal, and yet you have whirlwinds, droughts, thunderstorms. The share-market, being governed by laws, ought to be always equable and normal, and yet you have startling transactions, startling panics, startling disclosures, and a whole sensational romance of commercial crime and folly. Which of us has lived to be fifty years old, without having witnessed in private life sensation tragedies, alas! sometimes too fearful to be told, or at least sensational romances, which we shall take care not to tell, because we shall not be believed? Let the ditch-water philosophy say what it will, human life is not a ditch, but a wild and roaring river, flooding its banks, and eating out new channels with many a landslip. It is a strange world, and man, a strange animal, guided, it is true, usually by most common-place motives; but, for that reason, ready and glad at times to escape from them and their dulness and baseness; to give vent, if but for a moment, in wild freedom, to that demoniac element, which, as Goethe says, underlies his nature and all nature; and to prefer for an hour, to the normal and respectable ditch-water, a bottle of champagne or even a carouse on fire-water, let the consequences be what they may.

How else shall we explain such a phenomenon as those old crusades? Were they undertaken for any purpose, commercial or other? Certainly not for lightening an overburdened population. Nay, is not

the history of your own Mormons, and their exodus into the far West, one of the most startling instances which the world has seen for several centuries, of the unexpected and incalculable forces which lie hid in man? Believe me, man's passions, heated to igniting point, rather than his prudence cooled down to freezing point, are the normal causes of all great human movement. And a truer law of social science than any that political economists are wont to lay down, is that old 'Dov'é la Donna' of the Italian judge, who used to ask, as a preliminary to every case, civil or criminal, which was brought before him, 'Dov' é la Donna?' 'Where is the lady?' certain, like a wise old gentleman, that a woman was most probably at the bottom of the matter.

Strangeness? Romance? Did any of you ever read—if you have not you should read—Archbishop Whately's *Historic Doubts about the Emperor Napoleon the First?* Therein the learned and witty Archbishop proved, as early as 1819, by fair use of the criticism of Mr. Hume and the Sceptic School, that the whole history of the great Napoleon ought to be treated by wise men as a myth and a romance, that there is little or no evidence of his having existed at all; and that the story of his strange successes and strange defeats was probably invented by our Government in order to pander to the vanity of the English nation.

I will say this, which Archbishop Whately, in a late edition, foreshadows, wittily enough—that if one or two thousand years hence, when the history of the late Emperor Napoleon the Third, his rise and fall, shall come to be subjected to critical analysis by future Philistine historians of New Zealand or Australia, it will be proved by them to be utterly mythical, incredible, monstrous—and that all the more, the more the actual facts remain to puzzle their unimaginative brains. What will they make, two thousand years hence, of the landing at Boulogne with the tame eagle? Will not that, and stranger facts still, but just as true, be relegated to the region of myth, with the dream of Astyages, and the young and princely herdsman playing at king over his fellow-slaves?

But enough of this. To me, these bits of romance often seem the truest, as well as the most important, portions of history.

When old Herodotus tells me how, King Astyages having guarded the frontier, Harpagus sent a hunter to young Cyrus with a fresh-killed hare, telling him to open it in private; and how, sewn up in it was the letter, telling him that the time to rebel was come, I am inclined to say, That must be true. So beneath the dignity of history, so quaint and unexpected, it is all the more likely *not* to have been invented.

So with that other story—How young Cyrus

giving out that his grandfather had made him general of the Persians, summoned them all, each man with a sickle in his hand, into a prairie full of thorns, and bade them clear it in one day ; and how when they, like loyal men, had finished, he bade them bathe, and next day he took them into a great meadow and feasted them with corn and wine, and all that his father's farm would yield, and asked them which day they liked best ; and, when they answered as was to be expected, how he opened his parable and told them, 'Choose, then, to work for the Persians like slaves, or to be free with me.'

Such a tale sounds to me true. It has the very savour of the parables of the Old Testament ; as have, surely, the dreams of the old Sultan, with which the tale begins. Do they not put us in mind of the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, in the Book of Daniel ?

Such stories are actually so beautiful that they are very likely to be true. Understand me, I only say likely ; the ditch-water view of history is not all wrong. Its advocates are right in saying great historic changes are not produced simply by one great person, by one remarkable event. They have been preparing, perhaps, for centuries. They are the result of numberless forces, acting according to laws, which might have been foreseen, and will be foreseen, when the science of History is more perfectly understood.

For instance, Cyrus could not have conquered the Median Empire at a single blow, if first that empire had not been utterly rotten; and next, if he and his handful of Persians had not been tempered and sharpened, by long hardihood, to the finest cutting edge.

Yes, there were all the materials for the catastrophe—the cannon, the powder, the shot. But to say that the Persians must have conquered the Medes, even if Cyrus had never lived, is to say, as too many philosophers seem to me to say, that, given cannon, powder, and shot, it will fire itself off some day if we only leave it alone long enough.

It may be so. But our usual experience of Nature and Fact is, that spontaneous combustion is a rare and exceptional phenomenon; that if a cannon is to be fired, someone must arise and pull the trigger. And I believe that in Society and Politics, when a great event is ready to be done, someone must come and do it—do it, perhaps, half unwittingly, by some single rash act—like that first fatal shot fired at Fort Sumter—which makes, as by an electric spark, a whole nation flash into enduring flame.

But to return to Cyrus and his Persians.

I know not whether the *Cyropædia* is much read in your schools and universities. But it is one of the books which I should like to see, either in a translation or its own exquisite Greek, in the hands of every

young man. It is not all fact. It is but a historic romance. But it is better than history. It is an ideal book, like Sidney's *Arcadia* or Spenser's *Fairy Queen*—the ideal self-education of an ideal hero. And the moral of the book—ponder it well, all young men who have the chance or the hope of exercising authority among your fellow-men, the noble and most Christian moral of that heathen book is this: that the path to solid and beneficent influence over our fellow-men lies, not through brute force, not through cupidity, but through the highest morality; through justice, truthfulness, humanity, self-denial, modesty, courtesy, and all which makes man or woman lovely in the eyes of mortals or of God.

Yes, the *Cyropædia* is a noble book, about a noble personage. But I cannot forget that there are nobler words by far concerning that same noble personage, in the magnificent series of Hebrew Lyrics, which begins, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the Lord'—in which the inspired poet, watching the rise of Cyrus and his Puritans, and the fall of Babylon, and the idolatries of the East, and the coming deliverance of his own countrymen, speaks of the Persian hero in words so grand that they have been often enough applied, and with all fitness, to one greater than Cyrus, and than all men:—

> Who raised up the righteous man from the East,
> And called him to attend his steps?

Who subdued nations at his presence,
And gave him dominion over kings?
And made them like the dust before his sword,
And the driven stubble before his bow?
He pursueth them, he passeth in safety,
By a way never trodden before by his feet.
Who hath performed and made these things,
Calling the generations from the beginning?
I, Jehovah, the first and the last, I am the same.

Behold my servant, whom I will uphold;
My chosen, in whom my soul delighteth;
I will make my spirit rest upon him,
And he shall publish judgment to the nations.
He shall not cry aloud, nor clamour,
Nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets.
The bruised reed he shall not break,
And the smoking flax he shall not quench.
He shall publish justice, and establish it.
His force shall not be abated, nor broken,
Until he has firmly seated justice in the earth,
And the distant nations shall wait for his Law.
Thus saith the God, even Jehovah,
Who created the heavens, and stretched them out;
Who spread abroad the earth, and its produce,
I, Jehovah, have called thee for a righteous end,
And I will take hold of thy hand, and preserve thee,
And I will give thee for a covenant to the people,
And for a light to the nations;
To open the eyes of the blind,
To bring the captives out of prison,
And from the dungeon those who dwell in darkness.
I am Jehovah—that is my name;

And my glory will I not give to another,
Nor my praise to the graven idols.

Who saith to Cyrus—Thou art my shepherd,
And he shall fulfil all my pleasure :
Who saith to Jerusalem—Thou shalt be built ;
And to the Temple—Thou shalt be founded.
Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed,
To Cyrus whom I hold fast by his right hand,
That I may subdue nations under him,
And loose the loins of kings ;
That I may open before him the two-leaved doors,
And the gates shall not be shut ;
I will go before thee
And bring the mountains low.
The gates of brass will I break in sunder,
And the bars of iron hew down.
And I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
And the hoards hid deep in secret places,
That thou mayest know that I am Jehovah.
I have surnamed thee, though thou knowest not me.
I am Jehovah and none else :
Beside me there is no God.
I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me,
That they may know from the rising of the sun,
And from the west, that there is none beside me ;
I am Jehovah, and none else ;
Forming light, and creating darkness ;
Forming peace, and creating evil.
I, Jehovah, make all these.

This is the Hebrew prophet's conception of the great Puritan of the Old World who went forth with

such a commission as this, to destroy the idols of the East, while

> The isles saw that, and feared,
> And the ends of the earth were afraid ;
> They drew near, they came together ;
> Everyone helped his neighbour,
> And said to his brother, Be of good courage.
>
> The carver encouraged the smith,
> He that smoothed with the hammer
> Him that smote on the anvil ;
> Saying of the solder, It is good ;
> And fixing the idol with nails, lest it be moved ;

But all in vain ; for as the poet goes on—

> Bel bowed down, and Nebo stooped ;
> Their idols were upon the cattle,
> A burden to the weary beast.
> They stoop, they bow down together ;
> They could not deliver their own charge ;
> Themselves are gone into captivity.

And what, to return, what was the end of the great Cyrus and of his empire?

Alas, alas! as with all human glory, the end was not as the beginning.

We are scarce bound to believe positively the story how Cyrus made one war too many, and was cut off in the Scythian deserts, falling before the arrows of mere savages ; and how their queen, Tomyris, poured blood down the throat of the dead corpse, with the

words, 'Glut thyself with the gore for which thou hast thirsted.' But it may be true—for Xenophon states it expressly, and with detail—that Cyrus, from the very time of his triumph, became an Eastern despot, a sultan or a shah, living apart from his people in mysterious splendour, in the vast fortified palace which he built for himself; and imitating and causing his nobles and satraps to imitate, in all but vice and effeminacy, the very Medes whom he had conquered. And of this there is no doubt—that his sons and their empire ran rapidly through that same vicious circle of corruption to which all despotisms are doomed, and became within 250 years, even as the Medes, the Chaldeans, the Lydians, whom they had conquered, children no longer of Ahura Mazda, but of Ahriman, of darkness and not of light, to be conquered by Alexander and his Greeks even more rapidly and more shamefully than they had conquered the East.

This is the short epic of the Persian Empire, ending alas! as all human epics are wont to end, sadly, if not shamefully.

But let me ask you, Did I say too much, when I said, that to these Persians we owe that we are here to-night?

I do not say that without them we should not have been here. God, I presume, when He is minded to do anything has more than one way of doing it.

But that we are to-night the last link in a chain of

causes and effects which reaches as far back as the emigration of the Persians southward from the plateau of Pamir, we cannot doubt.

For see. By the fall of Babylon and its empire the Jews were freed from their captivity—large numbers of them at least—and sent home to their own Jerusalem. What motives prompted Cyrus, and Darius after him, to do that deed?

Those who like to impute the lowest motives may say if they will, that Daniel and the later Isaiah found it politic to worship the rising sun, and flatter the Persian conquerors: and that Cyrus and Darius in turn were glad to see Jerusalem rebuilt, as an impregnable frontier fortress between them and Egypt. Be it so; I, who wish to talk of things noble, pure, lovely and of good report, would rather point you once more to the magnificent poetry of the later Isaiah which commences at the 40th chapter of the Book of Isaiah, and say—There, upon the very face of the document, stands written the fact that the sympathy between the faithful Persian and the faithful Jew—the two Puritans of the Old World, the two haters of lies, idolatries, superstitions—was actually as intense as it ought to have been, as it must have been.

Be that as it may, the return of the Jews to Jerusalem preserved for us the Old Testament, while it restored to them a national centre, a sacred city, like that of Delphi to the Greeks, Rome to the Romans, Mecca

to the Muslim, loyalty to which prevented their being utterly absorbed by the more civilised Eastern races among whom they had been scattered abroad as colonies of captives.

Then another, and a seemingly needful link of cause and effect ensued: Alexander of Macedon destroyed the Persian Empire, and the East became Greek, and Alexandria, rather than Jerusalem, became the head-quarters of Jewish learning. But for that very cause, the Scriptures were not left inaccessible to the mass of mankind, like the old Pehlevi liturgies of the Zend-avesta, or the old Sanscrit Vedas, in an obsolete and hieratic tongue, but were translated into, and continued in, the then all but world-wide Hellenic speech, which was to the ancient world what French is to the modern.

Then the East became Roman, without losing its Greek speech. And under the wide domination of that later Roman Empire—which had subdued and organised the whole known world, save the Parthian descendants of those old Persians, and our old Teutonic forefathers, in their German forests and on their Scandinavian shores—that Divine book was carried far and wide, East and West, and South, from the heart of Abyssinia to the mountains of Armenia, and to the isles of the ocean, beyond Britain itself to Ireland and to the Hebrides.

And that book—so strangely coinciding with the

old creed of the earlier Persians—that book, long misunderstood, long overlain by the dust, and overgrown by the parasitic fungi of centuries, that book it was which sent to these trans-Atlantic shores the founders of your great nation. That book gave them their instinct of freedom, tempered by reverence for Law. That book gave them their hatred of idolatry; and made them not only say but act upon their own words, with these old Persians and with the Jewish prophets alike, Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not; then said we, Lo, we come. In the volume of the book it is written of us, that we come to do thy will, O God. Yes, long and fantastic is the chain of causes and effects, which links you here to the old heroes who came down from Central Asia, because the land had grown so wondrous cold, that there were ten months of winter to two of summer; and when simply after warmth and life, and food for them and for their flocks, they wandered forth to found and help to found a spiritual kingdom.

And even in their migration, far back in these dim and mystic ages, have we found the earliest link of the long chain? Not so. What if the legend of the change of climate be the dim recollection of an enormous physical fact? What if it, and the gradual depopulation of the whole north of Asia be owing, as geologists now suspect, to the slow and age-long uprise of the whole of Siberia, thrusting the warm Arctic

sea further and further to the northward, and placing between it and the Highlands of Thibet an ever-increasing breadth of icy land, destroying animals, and driving whole races southward, in search of the summer and the sun?

What if the first link in the chain, as yet conceivable by man, should be the cosmic changes in the distribution of land and water, which filled the mouths of the Siberian rivers with frozen carcases of woolly mammoth and rhinoceros; and those again, doubt it not, of other revolutions, reaching back and back, and on and on, into the infinite unknown. Why not? For so are all human destinies

Bound with gold chains unto the throne of God.

# LECTURE V.

## ANCIENT CIVILISATION.

THERE is a theory abroad in the world just now about the origin of the human race, which has so many patent and powerful physiological facts to support it that we must not lightly say that it is absurd or impossible; and that is, that man's mortal body and brain were derived from some animal and ape-like creature. Of that I am not going to speak now. My subject is—How this creature called man, from whatever source derived, became civilised, rational, and moral. And I am sorry to say there is tacked on by many to the first theory, another which does not follow from it, and which has really nothing to do with it, and it is this—that man, with all his wonderful and mysterious aspirations, always unfulfilled yet always precious, at once his torment and his joy, his very hope of everlasting life—that man, I say, developed himself, unassisted, out of a state of primæval brutishness, simply by calculations of pleasure and pain, by observing what actions would

pay in the long run and what would not; and so learnt to conquer his selfishness by a more refined and extended selfishness, and exchanged his brutality for worldliness, and then, in a few instances, his worldliness for next-worldliness. I hope I need not say that I do not believe this theory. If I did, I could not be a Christian, I think, nor a philosopher either. At least, if I thought that human civilisation had sprung from such a dunghill as that, I should, in honour to my race, say nothing about it, here or elsewhere.

Why talk of the shame of our ancestors? I want to talk of their honour and glory. I want to talk, if I talk at all, about great times, about noble epochs, noble movements, noble deeds, and noble folk; about times in which the human race—it may be through many mistakes, alas! and sin, and sorrow and bloodshed—struggled up one step higher on those great stairs which, as we hope, lead upward towards the far-off city of God; the perfect polity, the perfect civilisation, the perfect religion, which is eternal in the heavens.

Of great men, then, and noble deeds I want to speak. I am bound to do so first, in courtesy to my hearers. For in choosing such a subject I took for granted a nobleness and greatness of mind in them which can appreciate and enjoy the contemplation of that which is lofty and heroic, and that which is useful indeed,

though not to the purses merely or the mouths of men, but to their intellects and spirits; that highest philosophy which, though she can (as has been sneeringly said of her) bake no bread, can at least do this—and she alone—make men worthy to eat the bread which God has given them.

I am bound to speak on such subjects, because I have never yet met, or read of, the human company who did not require, now and then at least, being reminded of such times and such personages—of whatsoever things are just, pure, true, lovely, and of good report, if there be any manhood and any praise to think, as St. Paul bids us all, of such things, that we may keep up in our minds as much as possible a lofty standard, a pure ideal, instead of sinking to the mere selfish standard which judges all things, even those of the world to come, by profit and by loss, and into that sordid frame of mind in which a man grows to believe that the world is constructed of bricks and timber, and kept going by the price of stocks.

We are all tempted, and the easier and more prosperous we are, the more we are tempted, to fall into that sordid and shallow frame of mind. Sordid even when its projects are most daring, its outward luxuries most refined; and shallow, even when most acute, when priding itself most on its knowledge of human nature, and of the secret springs which, so it dreams, move the actions and make the history of

nations and of men. All are tempted that way, even the noblest-hearted. *Adhæsit pavimento venter*, says the old psalmist. I am growing like the snake, crawling in the dust, and eating the dust in which I crawl. I try to lift up my eyes to the heavens, to the true, the beautiful, the good, the eternal nobleness which was before all time, and shall be still when time has past away. But to lift up myself is what I cannot do. Who will help me? Who will quicken me? as our old English tongue has it. Who will give me life? The true, pure, lofty human life which I did *not* inherit from the primæval ape, which the ape-nature in me is for ever trying to stifle, and make me that which I know too well I could so easily become — a cunninger and more dainty-featured brute? Death itself, which seems at times so fair, is fair because even it may raise me up and deliver me from the burden of this animal and mortal body—

> 'Tis life, not death, for which I pant;
> 'Tis life, whereof my nerves are scant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want.

Man? I am a man not by reason of my bones and muscles, nerves and brain, which I have in common with apes and dogs and horses. I am a man—thou art a man or woman—not because we have a flesh—God forbid! but because there is a spirit in us, a divine spark and ray, which nature did not give, and

which nature cannot take away. And therefore, while I live on earth, I will live to the spirit, not to the flesh, that I may be, indeed, a *man*; and this same gross flesh, this animal ape-nature in me, shall be the very element in me which I will renounce, defy, despise; at least, if I am minded to be, not a merely higher savage, but a truly higher civilised man. Civilisation with me shall mean, not more wealth, more finery, more self-indulgence—even more æsthetic and artistic luxury; but more virtue, more knowledge, more self-control, even though I earn scanty bread by heavy toil; and when I compare the Cæsar of Rome or the great king, whether of Egypt, Babylon, or Persia, with the hermit of the *Thebaid*, starving in his frock of camel's hair, with his soul fixed on the ineffable glories of the unseen, and striving, however wildly and fantastically, to become an angel and not an ape, I will say the hermit, and not the Cæsar, is the civilised man.

There are plenty of histories of civilisation and theories of civilisation abroad in the world just now, and which profess to show you how the primæval savage has, or at least may have, become the civilised man. For my part, with all due and careful consideration, I confess I attach very little value to any of them: and for this simple reason that we have no facts. The facts are lost.

Of course, if you assume a proposition as certainly

true, it is easy enough to prove that proposition to be true, at least to your own satisfaction. If you assert with the old proverb, that you may make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, you will be stupider than I dare suppose anyone here to be, if you cannot invent for yourselves all the intermediate stages of the transformation, however startling. And, indeed, if modern philosophers had stuck more closely to this old proverb, and its defining verb 'make,' and tried to show how some person or persons—let them be who they may—men, angels, or gods—made the sow's ear into the silk purse, and the savage into the sage—they might have pleaded that they were still trying to keep their feet upon the firm ground of actual experience. But while their theory is, that the sow's ear grew into a silk purse of itself, and yet unconsciously and without any intention of so bettering itself in life; why, I think that those who have studied the history which lies behind them, and the poor human nature which is struggling, and sinning, and sorrowing and failing around them, and which seems on the greater part of this planet going downwards and not upwards, and by no means bettering itself, save in the increase of opera-houses, liquor-bars, and gambling-tables, and that which pertaineth thereto; then we, I think, may be excused if we say with the old Stoics—ἐπέχω—I withhold my judgment. I know nothing about the

matter yet; and you, O my imaginative, though learned friends, know I suspect very little either.

Eldest of things, Divine Equality:

so sang poor Shelley, and with a certain truth. For, if, as I believe, the human race sprang from a single pair, there must have been among their individual descendants an equality far greater than any which has been known on earth during historic times. But that equality was at best, the infantile innocence of the primary race, which faded away in the race as quickly, alas! as it does in the individual child. Divine—therefore it was one of the first blessings which man lost; one of the last, I fear, to which he will return; that to which civilisation, even at its best yet known, has not yet attained, save here and there for short periods; but towards which it is striving as an ideal goal, and, as I trust, not in vain.

The eldest of things which we see actually as history, is not equality, but an already developed hideous inequality, trying to perpetuate itself, and yet by a most divine and gracious law, destroying itself by the very means which it uses to keep itself alive.

'There were giants in the earth in those days. And Nimrod began to be a mighty one in the earth'—

A mighty hunter; and his game was man.

No; it is not equality which we see through the dim mists of bygone ages.

What we do see, is—I know not whether you will think me superstitious or old-fashioned, but so I hold—very much what the earlier books of the Bible show us under symbolic laws. Greek histories, Roman histories, Egyptian histories, Eastern histories, inscriptions, national epics, legends, fragments of legends—in the New World as in the Old—all tell the same story. Not the story without an end, but the story without a beginning. As in the Hindoo cosmogony, the world stands on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on—what? No man knows. I do not know. I only assert deliberately; waiting, as Napoleon says, till the world come round to me, that the tortoise does not stand—as is held by certain anthropologists, some honoured by me, some personally dear to me—upon the savages who chipped flints and fed on mammoth and reindeer in North-western Europe, shortly after the age of ice, a few hundred thousand years ago. These sturdy little fellows—the kinsmen probably of the Esquimaux and Lapps—could have been but the avant-couriers, or more probably the fugitives from the true mass of mankind—spreading northward from the Tropics, into climes becoming, after the long catastrophe of the age of ice, once more genial enough to support men who knew what decent comfort was, and were strong enough to get the same, by all means fair or foul. No. The tortoise of the human race does not stand on a

savage. The savage may stand on an ape-like creature. I do not say that he does not. I do not say that he does. I do not know; and no man knows. But at least I say that the civilised man and his world stand not upon creatures like to any savage now known upon the earth. For first, it seems to be most unlikely; and next, and more important to an inductive philosopher, there is no proof of it. I see no savages becoming really civilised men—that is—not merely men who will ape the outside of our so-called civilisation, even absorb a few of our ideas; not merely that; but truly civilised men who will think for themselves, invent for themselves, act for themselves; and when the sacred lamp of light and truth has been passed into their hands, carry it on unextinguished, and transmit it to their successors without running back every moment to get it relighted by those from whom they received it: and who are bound—remember that—patiently and lovingly to relight it for them; to give freely to all their fellow-men of that which God has given to them and to their ancestors; and let God, not man, be judge of how much the Red Indian or the Polynesian, the Caffre or the Chinese, is capable of receiving and of using.

Moreover, in history there is no record, absolutely no record, as far as I am aware, of any savage tribe civilising itself. It is a bold saying. I stand by my assertion: most happy to find myself confuted, even

in a single instance; for my being wrong would give me, what I can have no objection to possess, a higher opinion than I have now, of the unassisted capabilities of my fellow-men.

But civilisation must have begun somewhen, somewhere, with some person, or some family, or some nation; and how did it begin?

I have said already that I do not know. But I have had my dream—like the philosopher—and as I have not been ashamed to tell it elsewhere, I shall not be ashamed to tell it here. And it is this:—

What if the beginnings of true civilisation in this unique, abnormal, diseased, unsatisfied, incomprehensible, and truly miraculous and supernatural race we call man, had been literally, and in actual fact, miraculous and supernatural likewise? What if that be the true key to the mystery of humanity and its origin? What if the few first chapters of the most ancient and most sacred book should point, under whatever symbols, to the actual and the only possible origin of civilisation, the education of a man, or a family by beings of some higher race than man? What if the old Puritan doctrine of Election should be even of a deeper and wider application than divines have been wont to think? What if individuals, if peoples, have been chosen out from time to time for a special illumination, that they might be the lights of the earth, and the salt of the world? What if they have,

each in their turn, abused that divine teaching to make themselves the tyrants, instead of the ministers, of the less enlightened? To increase the inequalities of nature by their own selfishness, instead of decreasing them, into the equality of grace, by their own self-sacrifice? What if the Bible after all was right, and even more right than we were taught to think?

So runs my dream. If, after I have confessed to it, you think me still worth listening to, in this enlightened 19th century, I will go on.

At all events, what we see at the beginning of all known and half-known history, is not savagery, but high civilisation, at least of an outward and material kind. Do you demur? Then recollect, I pray you, that the three oldest peoples known to history on this planet are Egypt, China, Hindostan. The first glimpses of the world are always like those which the book of Genesis gives us; like those which your own continent gives us. As it was 400 years ago in America, so it was in North Africa and in Asia 4,000 years ago, or 40,000 for aught I know. Nay, if anyone should ask—And why not 400,000 years ago, on Miocene continents long sunk beneath the Tropic sea? I for one have no rejoinder save—We have no proofs as yet.

There loom up, out of the darkness of legend, into the as yet dim dawn of history, what the old

Arabs call Races of pre-Adamite Sultans—colossal monarchies, with fixed and often elaborate laws, customs, creeds; with aristocracies, priesthoods—seemingly always of a superior and conquering race; with a mass of common folk, whether free or half-free, composed of older conquered races; of imported slaves, too, and their descendants.

But whence comes the royal race, the aristocracy, the priesthood? You enquire, and you find that they usually know not themselves. They are usually—I had almost dared to say, always—foreigners. They have crossed the neighbouring mountains. They have come by sea, like Dido to Carthage, like Manco Cassae and Mama Bello to America, and they have sometimes forgotten when. At least they are wiser, stronger, fairer, than the aborigines. They are to them—as Jacques Cartier was to the Indians of Canada—as gods. They are not sure that they are not descended from gods. They are the Children of the Sun, or what not. The children of light, who ray out such light as they have, upon the darkness of their subjects. They are at first, probably, civilisers, not conquerors. For, if tradition is worth anything—and we have nothing else to go upon—they are at first few in number. They come as settlers, or even as single sages. It is, in all tradition, not the many who influence the few, but the few who influence the many.

So aristocracies, in the true sense, are formed. But

the higher calling is soon forgotten. The purer light is soon darkened in pride and selfishness, luxury and lust; as in Genesis, the sons of God see the daughters of men, that they are fair; and they take them wives of all that they choose. And so a mixed race springs up and increases, without detriment at first to the commonwealth. For, by a well-known law of heredity, the cross between two races, probably far apart, produces at first a progeny possessing the forces, and, alas! probably the vices of both. And when the sons of God go in to the daughters of men, there are giants in the earth in those days, men of renown. The Roman empire, remember, was never stronger than when the old Patrician blood had mingled itself with that of every nation round the Mediterranean.

But it does not last. Selfishness, luxury, ferocity, spread from above, as well as from below. The just aristocracy of virtue and wisdom becomes an unjust one of mere power and privilege; that again, one of mere wealth, corrupting and corrupt; and is destroyed, not by the people from below, but by the monarch from above. The hereditary bondsmen may know

> Who would be free,
> Himself must strike the blow.

But they dare not, know not how. The king must do it for them. He must become the State. 'Better one tyrant,' as Voltaire said, 'than many.' Better

stand in fear of one lion far away, than of many wolves, each in the nearest wood. And so arise those truly monstrous Eastern despotisms, of which modern Persia is, thank God, the only remaining specimen; for Turkey and Egypt are too amenable of late years to the influence of the free nations to be counted as despotisms pure and simple—despotisms in which men, instead of worshipping a God-man, worship the hideous counterfeit, a *Man*-god—a poor human being endowed by public opinion with the powers of deity, while he is the slave of all the weaknesses of humanity. But such, as an historic fact, has been the last stage of every civilisation—even that of Rome, which ripened itself upon this earth the last in ancient times, and, I had almost said, until this very day, except among the men who speak Teutonic tongues, and who have preserved through all temptations, and reasserted through all dangers, the free ideas which have been our sacred heritage ever since Tacitus beheld us, with respect and awe, among our German forests, and saw in us the future masters of the Roman Empire.

Yes, it is very sad, the past history of mankind. But shall we despise those who went before us, and on whose accumulated labours we now stand?

Shall we not reverence our spiritual ancestors? Shall we not show our reverence by copying them, at least whenever, as in those old Persians, we see in

them manliness and truthfulness, hatred of idolatries, and devotion to the God of light and life and good? And shall we not feel pity, instead of contempt, for their ruder forms of government, their ignorances, excesses, failures—so excusable in men who, with little or no previous teaching, were trying to solve for themselves for the first time the deepest social and political problems of humanity.

Yes, those old despotisms, we trust, are dead and never to revive. But their corpses are the corpses, not of our enemies, but of our friends and predecessors, slain in the world-old fight of Ormuzd against Ahriman—light against darkness, order against disorder. Confusedly they fought, and sometimes ill: but their corpses piled the breach and filled the trench for us, and over their corpses we step on to what should be to us an easy victory—what may be to us, yet, a shameful ruin.

For if we be, as we are wont to boast, the salt of the earth and the light of the world, what if the salt should lose its savour? What if the light which is in us should become darkness? For myself, when I look upon the responsibilities of the free nations of modern times, so far from boasting of that liberty in which I delight—and to keep which I freely, too, could die—I rather say, in fear and trembling, God help us on whom He has laid so heavy a burden as to make us free; responsible, each individual of us, not

only to ourselves, but to Him and all mankind. For if we fall we shall fall I know not whither, and I dare not think.

How those old despotisms, the mighty empires of old time, fell, we know, and we can easily explain. Corrupt, luxurious, effeminate, eaten out by universal selfishness and mutual fear, they had at last no organic coherence. The moral anarchy within showed through, at last burst through, the painted skin of prescriptive order which held them together. Some braver and abler, and usually more virtuous people, often some little, hardy, homely mountain tribe, saw that the fruit was ripe for gathering; and, caring nought for superior numbers—and saying with German Alaric when the Romans boasted of their numbers, 'The thicker the hay the easier it is mowed'—struck one brave blow at the huge inflated wind-bag—as Cyrus and his handful of Persians struck at the Medes; as Alexander and his handful of Greeks struck afterwards at the Persians—and behold, it collapsed upon the spot. And then the victors took the place of the conquered; and became in their turn an aristocracy, and then a despotism; and in their turn rotted down and perished. And so the vicious circle repeated itself, age after age, from Egypt and Assyria to Mexico and Peru.

And therefore, we, free peoples as we are, have need to watch, and sternly watch, ourselves. Equality of some kind or other is, as I said, our natural and seem-

ingly inevitable goal. But which equality? For there are two—a true one and a false; a noble and a base; a healthful and a ruinous. There is the truly divine equality, and there is the brute equality of sheep and oxen, and of flies and worms. There is the equality which is founded on mutual envy. The equality which respects others, and the equality which asserts itself. The equality which longs to raise all alike, and the equality which desires to pull down all alike. The equality which says—Thou art as good as I, and it may be better too, in the sight of God. And the equality which says—I am as good as thou, and will therefore see if I cannot master thee.

Side by side, in the heart of every free man, and every free people, are the two instincts struggling for the mastery, called by the same name, but bearing the same relation to each other as Marsyas to Apollo, the Satyr to the God. Marsyas and Apollo, the base and the noble, are, as in the old Greek legend, contending for the prize. And the prize is no less an one than all free people of this planet.

In proportion as that nobler idea conquers, and men unite in the equality of mutual respect and mutual service, they move one step further towards realising on earth that Kingdom of God of which it is written—'The despots of the nations exercise dominion over them, and they that exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But he that will be great among you let him be the servant of all.'

And in proportion as that base idea conquers, and selfishness, not self-sacrifice, is the ruling spirit of a State, men move on, one step forward towards realising that kingdom of the devil upon earth, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' Only, alas! in that evil equality of envy and hate, there is no hindmost, and the devil takes them all alike.

And so is a period of discontent, revolution, internecine anarchy, followed by a tyranny endured, as in old Rome, by men once free, because tyranny will at least do for them, what they were too lazy and greedy and envious to do for themselves.

And all because they have forgot
What 'tis to be a man—to curb and spurn
The tyrant in us : the ignobler self
Which boasts, not loathes, its likeness to the brute;
And owns no good save ease, no ill save pain,
No purpose, save its share in that wild war
In which, through countless ages, living things
Compete in internecine greed. Ah, loving God,
Are we as creeping things, which have no lord?
That we are brutes, great God, we know too well;
Apes daintier-featured; silly birds, who flaunt
Their plumes, unheeding of the fowler's step;
Spiders, who catch with paper, not with webs;
Tigers, who slay with cannon and sharp steel,
Instead of teeth and claws :—all these we are.
Are we no more than these, save in degree?
Mere fools of nature, puppets of strong lusts,
Taking the sword, to perish by the sword

Upon the universal battle-field,
Even as the things upon the moor outside?

The heath eats up green grass and delicate herbs;
The pines eat up the heath; the grub the pine;
The finch the grub; the hawk the silly finch;
And man, the mightiest of all beasts of prey,
Eats what he lists. The strong eat up the weak;
The many eat the few; great nations, small;
And he who cometh in the name of all
Shall, greediest, triumph by the greed of all,
And, armed by his own victims, eat up all.
While ever out of the eternal heavens
Looks patient down the great magnanimous God,
Who, Master of all worlds, did sacrifice
All to Himself? Nay: but Himself to all;
Who taught mankind, on that first Christmas Day,
What 'tis to be a man—to give, not take;
To serve, not rule; to nourish, not devour;
To lift, not crush; if need, to die, not live.

'He that cometh in the name of all'—the popular military despot—the 'saviour of his country'—he is our internecine enemy on both sides of the Atlantic, whenever he arises—the inaugurator of that Imperialism, that Cæsarism into which Rome sank, when not her liberties merely, but her virtues, were decaying out of her—the sink into which all wicked States, whether republics or monarchies, are sure to fall, simply because men must eat and drink for to-morrow they die. The Military and Bureaucratic Despotism which

keeps the many quiet, as in old Rome, by *panem et Circenses*—bread and games—or if need be, Pilgrimages; that the few may make money, eat, drink, and be merry, as long as it can last. That, let it ape as it may—as did the Cæsars of old Rome at first—as another Emperor did even in our own days—the forms of dead freedom, really upholds an artificial luxury by brute force; and consecrates the basest of all aristocracies, the aristocracy of the money bag, by the divine sanction of the bayonet.

That at all risks, even at the price of precious blood, the free peoples of the earth must ward off from them; for, makeshift and stop-gap as it is, it does not even succeed in what it tries to do. It does not last. Have we not seen that it does not, cannot last? How can it last. This falsehood, like all falsehoods, must collapse at one touch of Ithuriel's spear of truth and fact. And—

'Then saw I the end of these men. Namely, how Thou dost set them in slippery places, and casteth them down.

'Suddenly do they perish, and come to a fearful end. Yea, like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt Thou make their image to vanish out of the city.'

Have we not seen that too, though, thank God, neither in England nor in the United States?

And then? What then? None knows, and none can know.

The future of France and Spain, the future of the Tropical Republics of Spanish America, is utterly blank and dark; not to be prophesied, I hold, by mortal man, simply because we have no like cases in the history of the past whereby to judge the tendencies of the present. Will they revive? Under the genial influences of free institutions will the good seed which is in them take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards? and make them all what that fair France has been, in spite of all her faults, so often in past years—a joy and an inspiration to all the nations round? Shall it be thus? God grant it may; but He, and He alone, can tell. We only stand by, watching, if we be wise, with pity and with fear, the working out of a tremendous new social problem, which must affect the future of the whole civilised world.

For if the agonising old nations fail to regenerate themselves, what can befall? What, when even Imperialism has been tried and failed, as fail it must? What but that lower depth within the lowest deep?

> That last dread mood
> Of sated lust, and dull decrepitude.
> No law, no art, no faith, no hope, no God.
> When round the freezing founts of life in peevish ring,
> Crouched on the bare-worn sod,
> Babbling about the unreturning spring,
> And whining for dead creeds, which cannot save,
> The toothless nations shiver to their grave.

And we, who think we stand, let us take heed lest we fall. Let us accept, in modesty and in awe, the responsibility of our freedom, and remember that that freedom can be preserved only in one old-fashioned way. Let us remember that the one condition of a true democracy is the same as the one condition of a true aristocracy, namely, virtue. Let us teach our children, as grand old Lilly taught our forefathers 300 years ago—'It is virtue, gentlemen, yea, virtue that maketh gentlemen; that maketh the poor rich, the subject a king, the lowborn noble, the deformed beautiful. These things neither the whirling wheel of fortune can overturn, nor the deceitful cavillings of worldlings separate, neither sickness abate, nor age abolish.'

Yes. Let us teach our children thus on both sides of the Atlantic. For if they—which God forbid—should grow corrupt and weak by their own sins, there is no hardier race now left on earth to conquer our descendants and bring them back to reason, as those old Jews were brought, by bitter shame and woe. And all that is before them and the whole civilised world, would be long centuries of anarchy such as the world has not seen for ages—a true Ragnarok, a twilight of the very gods, an age such as the wise woman foretold in the old Voluspà.

> When brethren shall be
> Each other's bane,

And sisters' sons rend
The ties of kin.
Hard will be that age,
An age of bad women,
An axe-age, a sword-age,
Shields oft cleft in twain,
A storm-age, a wolf-age,
Ere earth meet its doom.

So sang, 2,000 years ago, perhaps, the great unnamed prophetess of our own race, of what might be, if we should fail mankind and our own calling and election.

God grant that day may never come. But God grant, also, that if that day does come, then may come true also what that wise Vala sang, of the day when gods, and men, and earth should be burnt up with fire.

When slaked Surtur's flame is,
Still the man and the maiden,
Hight Valour and Life,
Shall keep themselves hid
In the wood of remembrance.
The dew of the dawning
For food it shall serve them;
From them spring new peoples.

New peoples. For after all is said, the ideal form of human society is democracy.

A nation—and, were it even possible, a whole

world—of free men, lifting free foreheads to God and Nature; calling no man master—for one is their master, even God; knowing and obeying their duties towards the Maker of the Universe, and therefore to each other, and that not from fear, nor calculation of profit or loss, but because they loved and liked it, and had seen the beauty of righteousness and trust and peace; because the law of God was in their hearts, and needing at last, it may be, neither king nor priest, for each man and each woman, in their place, were kings and priests to God. Such a nation—such a society. What nobler conception of mortal existence can we form? Would not that be, indeed, the kingdom of God come on earth?

And tell me not that that is impossible—too fair a dream to be ever realised. All that makes it impossible is the selfishness, passions, weaknesses, of those who would be blest were they masters of themselves, and therefore of circumstances; who are miserable because, not being masters of themselves, they try to master circumstance, to pull down iron walls with weak and clumsy hands, and forget that he who would be free from tyrants must first be free from his worst tyrant, self.

But tell me not that the dream is impossible. It is so beautiful that it must be true. If not now, nor centuries hence, yet still hereafter. God would never, as I hold, have inspired man with that rich imagina-

tion had he not meant to translate, some day, that imagination into fact.

The very greatness of the idea, beyond what a single mind or generation can grasp, will ensure failure on failure,—follies, fanaticisms, disappointments, even crimes, bloodshed, hasty furies, as of children baulked of their holiday.

But it will be at last fulfilled, filled full, and perfected; not perhaps here, or among our peoples, or any people which now exist on earth: but in some future civilisation—it may be in far lands beyond the sea—when all that you and we have made and done shall be as the forest-grown mounds of the old nameless civilisers of the Mississippi valley.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

00093814

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018